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# SOCIABLE AESTHETICS OF BODILY SENSES AND THE “HAPTICA” PROJECTS

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## I. Introduction

Our information-intensive society, with the increasing popularity of various devices such as mobile phones, is a society that allows everyone to be a designer of communication in some sense. But, in this milieu, rather than improving the user-friendliness of different communication devices, it is more important for us to pay attention to the possibilities of designing the bodies of human beings – those who actually live and act in the community in a state of symbiosis with technological devices. What constitutes our bodily senses? How plastic are they? How can we transform them? We need to discuss these questions. We need body aesthetics dealing with design of our bodily senses. But is such an aesthetics possible?

Our claim is that aesthetics of bodily senses is possible if it can be a “sociable” aesthetics of bodily senses. “Sociable” means “collaborative with others.” This includes the sciences as the “Other” of aesthetics. We would also claim that it inevitably requires the support of actual body workshops. Later in section V we examine the “haptica” projects as an example of these body workshops. These particular workshops, organized since the year 2000 by Prof. Suzuki, a researcher in the field of computer science and complex system theories, and Rieko Suzuki, an artist and aesthetician, have been exploring the possibilities of design related to the haptic sense – the sense of touch.<sup>1</sup> [Fig. 1]

However, our claim of sociable aesthetics of bodily senses would cause at least the following objections: (1) granting the importance of the body, the claim of “sociable” aesthetics of the bodily senses – that is, the claim of body aesthetics collaborative with sciences – ignores the reason we once had paid the attention to the body. The body once had been introduced in order to criticize scientific approach, for example, strong AI program; (2) contrary to our expectations, science itself may not receive our proposal of collaboration with nonscientific fields such as aesthetics; (3) Bodily senses are inner sensibilities. They remain only private. Therefore even if such “sociable” aesthetics of bodily senses were possible, we could not discuss such inner sensibilities.



Fig. 1: the “haptica” project

In the following sections, we argue that each objection is not correct and that we can propose the possibility of sociable aesthetics of bodily senses and the necessity of the body workshops like “haptica” projects. Sociable aesthetics of bodily senses inevitably requires body workshops.

## II. Does the claim of “sociable” aesthetics of the bodily senses ignore the reason why we once paid attention to the body?

In this section, we would like to reconfirm how the body came into focus and why this does not prohibit discussions about the bodily senses.

### 1. HOW THE BODY CAME INTO FOCUS

Let us briefly review how the concept of the body came into focus in the late 1970s, when the body again<sup>2</sup> came to be the subject of theoretical inquiry. In the late 1970s, the body was highlighted in terms of two broad critical trends, criticism of linguistic relativism and criticisms of strong AI [= Artificial Intelligence] programs [that is to say, criticisms of language-centered approaches].

*Criticisms of linguistic relativism:* some believed that the body could be a key to overcoming the relativity of our

<sup>1</sup> About the details of these projects see section IV.

<sup>2</sup> Of course, we have so many preceding theoretical inquiries about the body.

perception of the world limited by language. In contrast to the diversity of languages we speak and the private nature of our linguistic interpretations, our bodies are more or less the same. In this line of reasoning, some believed that the commonality of our bodily experience could offer a more universal understanding of the world than that provided by our more limited linguistic experiences.<sup>3</sup>

*Criticisms of strong AI program*<sup>4</sup>: this issue is best explained by what is known as the "frame problem."

Even when a robot has been supplied with all of the necessary, discrete propositions about the world [linguistically prescribed model of the world], it is still difficult for the robot to make correct judgments about contexts and situations [backgrounds]. Since it cannot judge correctly, it cannot act appropriately. Our bodies, however, can perceive backgrounds in their own unique way, prompting us to take appropriate actions. Our bodies understand something more than the sum total of all the discrete and elemental pieces of knowledge that we prescribe to the robot. Our bodies are aware of the whole that is larger than the sum total of its elements. We may call it an "organic whole."

## 2. WE NEED TO DISCUSS OUR BODILY SENSES.

As we have seen, the body was utilized in the contexts of criticisms of linguistic-relativism and the strong AI program. Especially we paid attention to the body in order to criticize the latter – that is, the idea that we could perfectly control the body by linguistic prescriptions. But it never means that we must prohibit any necessary scientific discussions about the bodily senses.

However, the body became an "all-encompassing" presence inclusive of our faculties of senses, emotions, background understanding, and judgment. It became something beyond our discussion.

From this point of view, this glorification of the body as such a presence appears as a nonproductive attitude that could culminate in a refusal of any attempts to discuss and theorize the body. That is to say, we may end up repeating the word "body" like a mantra without daring to discuss it any further.

Arguments asserting the commonality of our bodies also became obstacles to researchers. Even though the body's commonality played an important role in the context of criticisms of linguistic relativism and of language-centered approach, such arguments will not be applicable to discussions of the plasticity of the bodily senses as long as they assume that the body is a unified entity unaffected by contacts with externals. Making these arguments seems to assert that the body is a private entity.

Since these theories of the body are exclusive [not "sociable"], there is no potential for further development. This is no better than the strong AI program. We need to discuss the bodily senses.

## III. Does science refuse to collaborate with body aesthetics? : A proposal from "control" to "guide"

In this section, by showing a recent shift in scientific thought, which we characterize as the shift from "control" to "guide," we argue that science itself is ready to collaborate with body aesthetics.

By the early 1990s, if not sooner, rather than a top-down approach attempting to control the body by linguistically prescribed knowledge about the world, some attempts of a bottom-up approach were undertaken. They involved the engineering of various types of robots simulating various types of bodies [the human body, insect bodies and so on]. Among them, Rodney A. Brook's artificial insect and its "subsumption architecture" is the most famous example.<sup>5</sup> In contrast to strong AI program, the robot produced "appropriate" behavior through interaction with the environment without any prescribed, representational model of the world and any central system. Here we can see a shift in scientific thought. In fact, we must say that the robot did not produce the behaviors by itself but it was "guided" to produce such behaviors under the guidance of the environment. We characterize it as the shift from "control" to "guide."

The need of this shift is supported in different way by a fact known as "uncontrollability" of the brain. We can explain it as follows.

The brain as an intelligent system, like an operating system of a computer, can never stop. If it stops running, we receive fatal damage. Therefore, it must continue to move and process multimodal tasks constantly even during sleep. In case of vision, for instance, the brain processes multimodal and mutually dependent tasks at one time. It processes lower motion systems such as the vestibular-ocular response,<sup>6</sup> it projects visual information onto the visual area while filtering superfluous information, it controls<sup>7</sup> ocular motional movements and our behaviors through the cerebral neo-cortex, it feeds back visual information to the language area, conversely it feeds back linguistic information to the visual area and so on.

According to the fact, we can never believe that our vision is a simple output which results only from visual stimulation as an input. In case of vision, we can not decide exactly which results from which. Furthermore, we can never define the fixed boundary that contains all the necessities in order to calculate the vision. Usually in order to control a system we need at least three conditions: the boundary of the system, input and output. Take a bathtub as example. A bathtub corresponds to the boundary of the system, heat to input and temperature to output. By contrast, we can not determine any prerequisites for controlling the brain as an intelligent system. Therefore, we must say we can not control our brain and our senses.

<sup>3</sup> Richard Shusterman is so often misunderstood as an advocate of universality of the body. However, if you read his article carefully, you can easily understand that he insists the ambiguity of the body – commonality and difference, identity and transformability. See his article "Thinking Through the Body, Educating for the Humanities: A Plea for Somaesthetics," *Journal of Aesthetic Education*, Vol.40, No1 (Spring 2006): pp.3–21.

<sup>4</sup> For example, Hubert L. Dreyfus, *What Computers Can't Do: The Limits of Artificial Intelligence*, Harper & Row, 1979, especially ch. 7.

<sup>5</sup> Andy Clark and Josefa Toribio, "Doing without Representation?" *Synthese*, Vol. 101, No. 3 (December 1994): pp. 401–31.

<sup>6</sup> For examples, compensatory ocular movements and ocular movements during REM sleep.

<sup>7</sup> We use the word "control," but, of course, it never means that an area of the brain can control our behavior as a central system which has a linguistically prescribed perfect model of the world.

The same thing is true of our bodily senses. It is difficult for us to determine the boundary of the bodily senses.<sup>8</sup> We can not research and develop their plasticity by controlling them. So what should we do?

At this point, science seems to come closer to aesthetics. It has already been searching for the way to grasp obscure senses as such without any prescribed rules. It is ready to collaborate with aesthetics.

Let us remember the shift we proposed above, the shift from "control" to "guide," in order to open possibilities to discuss our bodily senses. Instead of controlling our bodily senses, we can develop their plasticity through interaction with the environment. Just as the artificial insect is "guided" to produce appropriate behaviors through interaction with the environment without any prescribed model of the world and any central system, so we can research the plasticity and transformability of our bodily senses under the guidance of the environment.

## IV. How can we discuss about bodily senses?

Bodily senses, as inner sensibilities, remain only private. Therefore, even if sociable aesthetics of bodily senses is possible, we can not discuss such inner sensibilities. Is it correct? The question here is how we may be able to facilitate discussions of bodily senses by a method other than linguistic prescription. In addition, we also ask what bodily senses are worthy of discussion. These are the issues of this section.

### 1. MAKING USE OF THE INTERDEPENDENCY BETWEEN DIFFERENT SENSES

In connection with this question, we must pay attention to the interdependency between proprioception, the most basic of our bodily senses, and our sense of vision pointed out by Barbara Montero.<sup>9</sup>

Proprioception is "the sense by which we acquire information about the positions and movements of our own bodies, via receptors in the joints, tendons, ligaments, muscles, and skin."<sup>10</sup> It is the private sensing of one's own body alone, which is independent of the sensing of any external object. Therefore, discussions about proprioception appear to be nearly impossible.

Montero admits that proprioception is private in nature, but asserts that this privacy does not preclude discussions about it. Montero tries to persuade us by presenting an example:

"A dancer might proprioceive only his or her own movements, but by talking to others and watching others, dancers can judge whether they are moving, more or less, in the same way."<sup>11</sup>

Our proprioception is in an interdependent relationship with our visual perception of the trajectories of other persons' movements. By referring to such visual perception, we can discuss with others even about our own proprioception, the private sensing of ourselves. That is to say, given a condition in which we can observe the movements of other persons' bodies while together performing the same physical movements, we are able to discuss our bodily senses.<sup>12</sup>

Hence, we affirm the following: we will be able to discuss bodily senses by creating a situation in which a number of persons together perform the same physical movements, and having them give expression to the bodily senses produced by the movements in terms of visual perception.

Sociable aesthetics of bodily senses inevitably requires such a body workshop to facilitate discussions about bodily senses. And it offers us an opportunity to research the plasticity and transformability of our bodily senses under the guidance of environment, under the guidance of other participants.

At this point we believe we can reject three objections to the possibility of sociable aesthetics of bodily senses and the necessity of body workshop which supports it.

### 2. DESIGNING THE HAPTIC SENSE

Among the variety of bodily senses experienced by us as we live in a community, what could be the one that is most worthy of discussion? We believe that it is the haptic sense, the sense of touch.

Firstly, haptic sensing is an experience available to common men and women without the need for special training. We may revive the memory of how we used our hands or bodies in various ways when we were infants. To have this experience, one does not need any special tools. Nevertheless, the more we explore it, we find that the experience of haptic sensing is profound and complex.

Secondly, the haptic sense is believed to be the most basic of our bodily senses. It is closely related to proprioception. It is directly related also to our experiencing of pleasure and displeasure.

Thirdly, the haptic sense is a door of perception open to one's own body as well as to external objects in the world. Interestingly, this produces the double perceptions of touching something and of oneself being touched.

In a number of contexts like these, the haptic sense is a bodily sense worthy of discussion.

## V. "Haptica" projects

In the last section, we introduce the purpose and program of the "haptica" projects<sup>13</sup> and try to explain the reason why we need such body workshops to promote our sociable

<sup>8</sup> Cf. Francisco J. Varela, Evan Thompson and Eleanor Rosch, *The Embodied Mind: Cognitive Science and Human Experience*, The MIT Press, 1991, especially ch. 8. In the area of cognitive science also, Mark Johnson had proposed motor-sensory "image schema" that had logical structures even though they were irreducible to sentences or propositions in his classical work, *The Body in the Mind: The Bodily Basis of Meaning, Imagination and Reason*, the University of Chicago Press, 1987.

<sup>9</sup> Barbara Montero, Proprioception as an Aesthetic Sense, *The Journal of Aesthetics and Art Criticism*, Vol.64, No.2 (Spring 2006): pp. 231–243.

<sup>10</sup> Montero, p. 231.

<sup>11</sup> Montero, p. 234.

<sup>12</sup> Alternatively, a public discussion about bodily senses could be based on what is called "synesthesia." Even though a person may not be able to experience perfect synesthesia, he or she may at least give expression to a bodily sense in terms of perception by another sense, such as visual perception, instead of describing it in words.

<sup>13</sup> Body workshops called "haptica": 1st, T&T Salon, Tokyo; 2nd, 3rd, Hohen-in Temple, Kyoto; 4th, at 1st International Symposium On Multi-Sensory Design, Nagoya Univ. 2005. (invited workshop); 5th, at 2nd International Symposium On Multi-Sensory Design, Nagoya Univ. 2006 (invited workshop). In addition, they make products that evoke our sense of touching. They are "Haptica haptico" (collaborate with handicappers).

aesthetics of bodily senses in connection with the points we have made above.

The purpose of the "haptica" projects, as we wrote above, is to explore the possibilities of design related to the haptic sense, the sense of touch. It adopts a following program: participants are asked to (1) make a pair; (2) massage their partner's face with oil; (3) continue to express their emotion during massage. After finishing massage they also asked to (4) express their emotion by painting, sculpture and so on; (5) make a score about their way of massaging [score of touching, Fig. 2]; (6) exchange the score and do massage according to their partner's score. Despite the simplicity of its appearance, this program satisfies several conditions we mentioned above. So we can easily explain the reason why we need these projects for our aesthetics.



Fig. 2: Score of touching

Firstly, they make use of the interdependency between the haptic sense and the visual. Second, they take a form of group work. These are the points which contribute to turn the private character of bodily senses into the discussible one [see section II, IV]. Third, exchanging the score and massaging his/her partner's face according to the partner's score is to expand his/her bodily senses beyond one's limitation and transform them. In order to massage the partner's face according to the score, he/she must imagine the way the partner massaged his/her face. Therefore, he/she is guided to produce his/her behavior under the guidance of the partner, through interaction with the other participants. It brings quite different result from when we use instructions prescribed by language. Furthermore, these accumulated scores will be the data of scientific analysis in the future. As the visualized bodily senses, they will be the basis for future collaboration of aesthetics with science [see section II, III].

In short, the "haptica" projects, with attempts to express the experience of haptic sensing by common men and women like us in terms of visual perception rather than by language, open our bodily senses to discussion, and make it possible for us to transform our bodily senses, opening up the possibility for us to design a community in which we are connected through our bodily senses.

## CONCLUSION:

A human community emerges from complex interactions between human bodies and the environment. In the depth of such interactions is the phenomenon of haptic sensing, which in itself is a product of complex interactions. Our explorations through the "haptica" projects of the possibili-

ties for design related to the haptic sense represent a natural outgrowth of the new theory of the aesthetics of the bodily senses which emerged after a paradigm shift, the shift from "control" to "guide," in science.<sup>14</sup>

<sup>14</sup> As we wrote above in section III, the brain is an "uncontrollable" entity. No prescribed rule can control him/her. So he/she needs a teacher who can "guide" him/her and teach him/her how to tell good from bad, how to tell what belongs to him/her from what does not through practical trainings in his/her infancy. One candidate of the teachers is our feelings of pleasure and displeasure. We can feel pleasure/displeasure through touching something. If the brain feels pleasure, the thing it touches is registered as good or as the thing which belongs to him/her. On the contrary, if the brain feels displeasure, it is registered as bad or as the thing which does not belong to him/her. The formation of his/her criteria through our feelings pleasure/displeasure, as well as the formation of his/her boundary through them, is quite important because it demarcates him/her from the environment and thus defends him/herself against attack from the environment. If someone could not form these criteria through touching in his/her infancy, he/she is distressed by everything in the world. He/She is terribly vulnerable to attack. It is quite dangerous. The traditional and central issue of aesthetics – that is, the occasional formation of criteria through our feelings of pleasure/displeasure, which oppose to prescribed rules, still retains its importance. We must continue to explore the possibilities of collaboration with various fields of science.

## THE MIRROR IS LEFT EMPTY! LOOKING IN A DETAIL FROM BLACAS EWER

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### Introduction:

The relationship between the human being and the mirror, any surface can reflect her/his own image, is an old one. This relationship was developed through the ages in conjunction with human's knowledge of the self and the environment. The mirror was first made of any material that is capable of reflecting images. They could started to be made out of stone then of metal and in the Renaissance, in Venice, they were made of glass covered with silver composite fused with paint. And by this development the mirror reflects clearer images and becomes lighter in weight, which makes it easier to hold and to transport. The glass mirror reflects resemblance to the person's image closely enough to the one that might be seen by others. And some people claims that the mirror changed the person's image of her/himself entirely.<sup>1</sup> There is an intimate relationship between women and mirror since ancient cultures. The Etruscans, for example, buried thousands of mirrors with their deads especially women and this could allude to the importance of mirrors as personal belongings.<sup>2</sup>

It is pointed out that the eye-bull is the first mirror that the human saw her/himself reflected on but others claim that the surface of water is the first natural mirror noticed by humans and it gives a wider image than the one reflected on the eye-bull.<sup>3</sup> This article will limit itself to a scene presented on an Islamic inlaid copper ewer in its artistic, social and economic context. This scene includes a mirror which plays an important role in its content.

### The Blacas Ewer and its scenes:

This ewer, found today in the British Museum, is made of copper and zinc and inlaid with silver and brass. It was produced in the city of Mosul found today in northern Iraq and signed by Shuja' bin Mina'h al-Mosuli in AH 629 (1232).<sup>4</sup> This city was renowned for its excellent production of metal vessels under the rule of Bani al-Artaq because of the brilliant metalworkers from Khurasan who had fled before the sweep of the Moguls and settled in the city. The rulers of Mosul, Bader ad-Din Lu'lu' for example, were enthusiastic about metal works and they used to give them as presents to the high ranking locals or to the rulers of neighboring lands.<sup>5</sup>

This ewer has several scenes inlaid and all of them are figurative and narrative. Some of these scenes are of horsemen hunting, and one of them presents Bahramqor hunting and his beloved Azada riding her camel. This one is narrated in the *Shahnama* of Firdausi. Another one shows a lady chastened in her camel-litter, we know that the contemporary historians complained of the elite ladies who were jamming the narrow paths of the city with their large camel-litters and making noises because of the golden accessories hanged on them.<sup>6</sup> Another scene, the subject of this article, shows a seated lady holding a mirror attended by her maid holding a casket filled with jewelry.<sup>7</sup> The subject is uncommon not only in Islamic art but also in most of Ancient and Medieval arts because the craftsmen were unfamiliar with the inner seclusion of the harems especially of their private lives such as dressing and making up.

### The lady is dressing up:

From the first glance we noticed that the lady in the scene is the seated one because of her size. The lady occupies more space than her maid although the maid is standing. Enlarging the person in a given scene is a well known tactic in showing her/his significance especially in ancient arts such as the ancient Egyptian. And this phenomena is also known in children's drawings as for example when they draw the class room they made their teacher bigger in size than themselves. But in our picture it seems that it is intended by the artist to show the heroin of the story. We can also differentiate between the women since the lady is seated and the maid is standing, setting while others are standing give you seniority. Both women are dressed almost the same which could be resulted of the teachings of Islam in this matter but I believe it is more showing off element since the lady considers the dress of her maid as part of her prestigious status.<sup>8</sup> Still the rendering of the lady is more eloquent than her maid, we see her full face while we only see the maid's profile. We notice all the charmed features of the lady's face but only one side of the maid's. This could be some sort of convincing tactic on the part of the artist toward the buyer of the ewer or made upon her request. It is clear from the narratives pictured on the ewer – some mentioned above and mostly related to women – that it is made for a woman. And while the maid covered her hair, the lady lefts

part of her hair to be seen and this alludes to the importance of the hair for women's look. She adds a large diamond fixed on the front top of a band around her head. Beside all that, there is a wider halo behind her head than that of the maid.

Concerning the effort each person involved with, we find the lady seated and busy in dressing up while the maid is standing up holding in front of her chest an open



3-D rectangle casket. The maid is ready for orders, looking at her lady and possibly she is thinking of some thing else and we will return to this idea later on in this article. The lady is holding a metal mirror in her left hand, while the other hand is raised up to the level of her chest to take a piece of jewelry from the casket. It seems that the casket, because of its color, is made of ivory or silver since the ladies from Islamic world from that period until late in the nineteenth century used to have caskets made of metal or ivory to store their valuable belongings such as jewelry and cosmetics.

For the purpose of explaining the function of the casket we can mention a real one from Andalusia. It is an ivory one made upon request of an important personality who is Aurora from the Bask.<sup>9</sup> She was concubine of al-Hakam II known as al-Mustansir bil-Lah who translated her name into Arabic to become Subh al-Bashkansiyah. He married her and she gave birth for two sons. The youngest of them became caliph after his father when he was only twelve years old.<sup>10</sup> Both casket and its owner's biography may shed some light on the role of the mirror in our picture but first let us turn to the relation between the mirror and the two persons.

### The image of the mirror:

We find in the upper part of our studied scene three circles: the mirror in the middle and two halos behind the heads. All these circles are inlaid with yellow brass and framed with silver. Their unified color, different diameters, and order encourage us to elaborate on them. We know that the halo is an old symbol used first in the Ancient Chinese art then appeared in Christian art and it is always associated with the important or venerated persons as symbols of the whole light. Afterward the halo appeared in Islamic art without any religious significance. It works as an open window behind the figures and becomes a source of light by itself. The mirror too is considered to be the disc of the sun in ancient civilizations like ancient Egyptian. This could lead us to see this golden mirror as a valuable piece of the lady's jewelry. Moreover the mirror because of its circular shape which associates it with the halos is by itself an important symbol for the lady's presence.

In terms of the sizes of the circles we find the biggest one is the lady's halo then the maid's and the last one is the mirror. The first is bigger than the head, the second is almost the same size of the head, and the smallest is the mirror which has been left empty. Here we can put forward several questions such as: was it possible to fill it of something? Why? And of what? We may speculate that it could reflect the face of one of

either woman, but which one? Although the lady captures the mirror's handle correctly it is directed toward us and by this it could not reflect any of them. We can conclude for this point that the mirror is put for another purpose which is to baffle us including the viewer and both women. Moreover, what dramatizes the scene is the position of the mirror between two women of different ranks and its relation to other elements in the scene.

Are we really baffled when looking in this mirror? Although it is a tiny element in a picture, it is a real mirror which can reflect your face or at least your eye. But because it is found in between two women you can imagine your embarrassment whether you are a male or a female. If you are a male you will be unlucky to sneeze your nose between two women, and if you are a female, it would be difficult to decide where to stand. The lady is attractive because of her qualifications both materialistic and personal. But the maid is also appealing since she holds a plenty of jewelry and because of her status, she will



get your passion. And the mirror is directed toward us which is the only empty circle and ready to perceive us and frame us inside. We realize that this mirror is put there really to tease us; is this the intention of the artist? Did he predict this situation? And why? Such questions will stay suspended exactly like our images in the mirror. This state of confusion is not limited to us but involves the women in the scene too. The experience with the mirror is a complex human one because it includes two relations; the first is between the self and the other, and the second is between the inner and the outer sides.<sup>11</sup> If we reconsider the story of Aurora and her casket and relate it to what we have reached we may uncover the maid's daydream to be a lady and the memories of the lady, possibly, when she was a maid which should have been forgotten. The phenomenon of mamluks whether men or women was wide spread at that period. The Atabekah themselves were male slaves for the Saljuks then they became rulers, and by the same token some female slaves had the chance to become ladies. Nevertheless

it is all right for the maid to dream of being a lady and owning this jewelry instead of holding them for her lady or like Aurora and her ivory box. It could not be an exaggeration to say that the mirror is a reflection of its period or at least of the social aspects of that culture especially the status of women. And we should not forget the sympathized artist with the maid because he was not far from her rank, in spite of his self confidence as craftsman uncovered by his signature. He let her dream, at least in his rendering, to come true.

The other thing we realize that there are three ewers in the picture, two of them look like dishes on high bases. They are resided on the virtual vertical line in the middle of the picture, one at the top near the lady's head, and the other down in front of her. These ewers were used as perfume keepers. The third one looks like our ewer. It is found in the middle, between the two women and under the mirror. It is possible for this ewer to be a base for the mirror because of their golden color and its neck which is long enough to have the mirror's handle fixed in. The artist did not let the mirror rest in this ewer. This act adds more life to the dynamics of the scene which heighten our perception of it. And there are three branches: one is behind the lady's head, and the others spring from the disc of the mirror on both sides. With little imagination, if we combine the ewer with a high neck, the mirror and the two branches it will become some form of the Tree of Life which is well known in pan-Mediterranean cultures since ancient times. If we consider this idea, it will be the first time for the mirror to be a constituting part of this symbol. This tree is considered as the cause for the Expulsion of Adam and Eve from Paradise, so it is called the Prohibited Tree. It is tempting to say that the mirror in the context of our scene is related to the prohibited fruits of this tree and the two females with temptation. And by this relation the scene is transformed into personification of temptation mixed with wanting, readiness, and hunting sharpened with beauty, wealth, and the atmosphere filled with perfumes and aroma.

We reach to the point that what is presented by Shuja' in this tiny scene is not less complicated than what offered by other artists much more renown than him who use mirrors in their art works. I imagine him exposing the mirror in front of our faces saying that the picture is a virtual reality as our ephemeral dreams or as our images in mirrors. In this visual comment he is not far from Las Meninas of Velazquez where his presence in it explains his willingness to present complete realism in untraditional way of rendering.<sup>12</sup> The composition of the work with its elements especially the mirror in the back-

ground alludes to that the painting is about painting and it was possible with the aid of the mirror. But Shuja' does not represent himself or any other person in the mirror and instead he left it for the illusion of the two women and for the person who will look at them.

We notice that the presentation of the mirror in our picture shows on the surface the subject of a woman who is dressing herself up but in

depth complicates the work to a degree which makes it full of meanings. This relationship between women and dressing up appears in artworks of contemporary female artists. The mirror plays crucial role in works made by artists such as Rachel Ynodelman and Nancy Angelo. They build on Lccan's mirror stage which alludes to the female independence toward herself against the attitude of society toward women in general and at the same time we sense the contradictions of presence and absence.<sup>13</sup>

She is a woman who faces us with her mirror and this relationship is seen in Manet's A Bar at Folies-Berger where the woman plays a decisive role in the idea of the painting and its subject. The self conscious of painting is different of self criticism since there are examples through the ages of it but the criticism of the nature of painting appeared with the advancement of modernity. In Manet's painting because of the woman, the mirror filing most of the painting, and the customer's tilted reflection we are put in confusion and driven on the questions: what are we really looking at? Is it a real image or a painted canvas? Are they no longer the same?<sup>14</sup> The reflected image on the mirror is a moving window and it seems that we are looking into a virtual world. Each picture in a mirror is unreal but has an original one and this unrealistic picture has its "realism" which should be connected in principle to a real holder. But it seems for Shuja' that the dreams have been kept as dreams. We can not cross the threshold of the world of reflected images in mirrors because we can only look at and not to put feet in.<sup>15</sup> By this, we understand both the intentions of Manet when he filled his painting with a mirror reflecting the whole scene in front of it, and those which made Shuja' left his tiny mirror empty.

#### (ENDNOTES)

<sup>1</sup> Mumford sees that the glass mirror coincided with the spring of self biographies and self portraits, see Mahmood Rajab, Al-mirah wa El-falsafah (The Mirror and Philosophy), Collage of Literature, Kuwait University, 2<sup>nd</sup> Vol., 1981, PP. 30-1.

<sup>2</sup> See the Bronze mirror showing Herekele and Mlacuch in the site of British Museum <http://www.thebritishmuseum.ac.uk/compass/ixbin/hixclient.exe>

<sup>3</sup> Rajab, *ibid*, P. 13.

<sup>4</sup> Duc Blacas was the original owner of the ewer, it is 30.4cm., See The Blacas Ewer in the site of The British Museum.

<sup>5</sup> Barbara Brend, *Islamic Art*, Harvard University Press, Cambridge, 1991, P. 106.

<sup>6</sup> The Blacas Ewer in the site of The British Museum, *ibid*.

<sup>7</sup> Barbara Brend, *ibid*, Pl. 70.

<sup>8</sup> One of the sayings of the prophet insists on eating and dressing the same for the patrons and their mamluks or servants, see 20/08/2005 <http://hadith.al-islam.com/Display.Display.aspx?Doc=6&ID=39047&Search.Text>

<sup>9</sup> Barbara Brend, *ibid*, P. 60, pl. 33.

<sup>10</sup> See for Subh 20/08/2005 <http://history.al-islam.com/names.aspx?year=390> and for the Muslims in Andalusia see 20/08/2005 <http://history.com/Display.aspx?f=sub00111.htm>

<sup>11</sup> Mahmood Rajab, *ibid*, P. 14.

<sup>12</sup> Oil on canvas, 318X276cm, Prado Museum, 1656-7.

<sup>13</sup> Lucy R. Lippard, *The Pink Glass-Selected Essays on Feminist Art*, The New Press, New York, 1995, P. 23.

<sup>14</sup> Tony Godfrey, *Conceptual Art*, Phaidon, London, 1998, PP. 19-20.

<sup>15</sup> Mahmood Rajab, *ibid*, PP. 31-4, 39.





# THE DIALECTICS OF SPACE AND THE UNITY OF THE ARTS. ON COSTAS TSOCLIS' "SAINT GEORGE"

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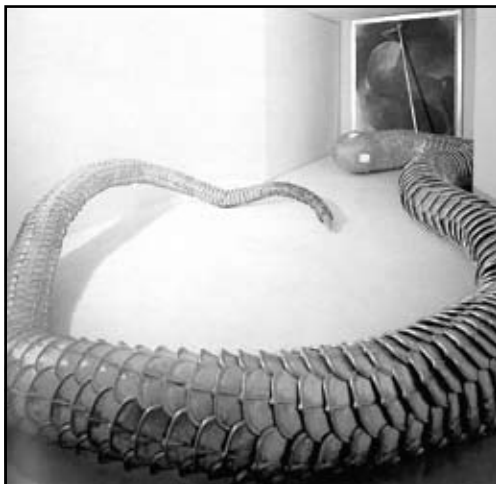
## 1. Introduction

The purpose of this paper is to bring into dialogue Costas Tsoclis' installation entitled "Saint George" (No 1) and Hegel's "dialectics of space", in order to analyze the semantic polyvalence of Tsoclis' artwork.<sup>1</sup> Hegel argues that the elaboration of space in art corresponds to the progress of the absolute spirit towards its own self-consciousness. When the elaboration of space has achieved its highest level, the end of art is brought about. My position is that Tsoclis' artwork cancels the nihilistic consequences of this dialectics of space, since it resituates the real dimensions of the artistic space and claims the unity of the arts. Furthermore, the semantics of Tsoclis' artwork goes beyond art history and poses questions pertaining to aesthetics and philosophy of culture.

## 2. Hegel: Art and space

Hegel develops his dialectics of space in contrast to Kant's transcendental aesthetics of space. In the latter case, aesthetics concerns sensation as the first of the two cognitive faculties and does not refer to art and artworks. While Kant considers space as an a priori form of pure intuition, which contributes to the knowledge of objects, Hegel, in his aesthetics, presents space in terms of historicity and art. For, Hegel maintains that the artistic space is not given from the very beginning, but it becomes what it is, while its formation goes together with the development of the self-consciousness of the absolute spirit.

According to Hegel, the problem of space and time refers to the adventure of the absolute, which has been externalized in nature and spirit. Art, as well as religion and philosophy, is a form of the self-consciousness of the absolute spirit. Through these activities, the absolute spirit achieves the highest level of its self-consciousness, that is the consciousness of being free, self-determined and reconciled with its opposite. As a matter of fact, Hegel's aesthetics has a metaphysical and logical foundation. No doubt, our understanding of ourselves and of the world is far away from Hegel's strong metaphysical demands. His aesthetics, however, in-



**No. 1. C. Tsoclis' "Saint George", 1990, painting (265 X 20 cm.), lance, sculpture (18m.) two monitors. Collection of the artist. Cf. Br. Corà, C. Tsoclis. Athens: Adam 2005 (in Greek), p. 133.**

cludes important aspects of the relationship between art and space that can also be relevant in considering the art of our days.

Hegel argues that the elaboration of space by the arts is accompanied by a variety of forms and expressions. Since art elevates the form of the human over the form of the animals, the artwork is transformed to a pictorial statement of the recognition of human dignity and freedom. Hegel explains the elaboration of space as the successive negation of spatial dimensions through artistic creativity. The whole procedure reminds the "via negationis", or the subtraction of the dimensions of the geometric shape. In the Platonic tradition, the movement from the shape to the surface and further to the line leads to the simple point, which is beyond every dimension and symbolizes the Ultimate One, the Divine.<sup>2</sup> This connection of geometry and

<sup>1</sup> The "dialectics of space" in art is Hegel's terminology. Cf. G. W. F. Hegel, *Vorlesungen über die Philosophie der Kunst*. Herausgegeben von Annemarie Gethmann-Siefert. Hamburg: Meiner 2003, p. 43.

<sup>2</sup> Hegel o. c. 42-43. About the Platonic and Neo-Platonic process of abstraction cf. H. J. Krämer, *Der Ursprung der Geistmetaphysik*. Amsterdam: Grüner. 1967<sup>2</sup>, pp. 105 ff.

metaphysics includes a mystic element justifying the slight discontinuity between spirit and nature, between seen and unseen, between limited and unlimited.

Hegel preserves this mystical element in two cases. First, he underlines that the point, which emerges after the subtraction of the dimensions in the arts, is the free subjectivity. Second, he maintains that nature is the object in itself, because the categories of reason cannot absorb and rationalize nature in an exhaustive way. Nevertheless, the spirit through its activity brings nature to the fore as the other of spirit itself, as the familiar space of its presence, of its own world. This recognition of the other as the equal of the same constitutes reconciliation. As Hegel argues, art is the only reconciling activity of the spirit that develops an immediate relationship with nature and matter. It corresponds to the need of the spirit to express its highest meaning in a dialectic way. Therefore, in the artwork, the spiritual becomes sensuous and the sensuous becomes spiritual.

According to Hegel's theory, the elaboration of space pro-



No. 2. C. Tsoclis' "Saint George", the sculpture as it was exhibited under the Acropolis in the exhibition "Athens by Art" on the occasion of the Olympic Games in Athens 2004. Cf. Corà, C. Tsoclis. Athens: Adam 2005 (in Greek), p. 132.

ceeds as the subtraction of the dimensions and as the creation of forms, as well. Its purpose is to elaborate an exterior indicating the interior. The process starts in and with architecture, which creates the laboratory for the work of the other arts. Architecture elaborates the three-dimensional space, since it builds up the temple, but it remains in the exterior.<sup>3</sup> Sculpture elaborates full spatiality, since the human form presented in the statue indicates the exterior and the interior of the spirit and utilises all three dimensions of space.<sup>4</sup>

The progress leads to the priority of painting. This art elaborates the two dimensions, the surface, through lines and points.<sup>5</sup> Further, painting withdraws from the total spatiality elaborated by sculpture and turns to the uncertainty of the interior. Therefore, painting takes the decisive turn from objectivity to

subjectivity.<sup>6</sup> According to Hegel's theory, music stays at the limit between exterior and interior. While mood belongs to the interior, musical instruments preserve the two dimensions of surface. Hegel considers architecture to be the primordial art that liberates the other arts towards their task and destination, but also to their full differentiation and separation. When the elaboration of space is realised in and through the arts, the spirit goes beyond art, since the possibilities of art to express the spirit have been exhausted. Besides, the spirit has discovered that its intrinsic determination lies beyond the realm of sensation and perception. Therefore, art achieves its end as the absolute expression of the spirit.

In elaborating space and creating the variety of the forms, art also creates the world of the artworks. Hegel points out that every artwork is defined in terms of quality and meaning, even though it is a thing because of its material substrate. It is rather a knot in a dynamic context, since it is the result of the spirit's activity and indicates the whole process of artistic signification. This world of the artworks is not separated from the cultural and social world. On the contrary, it partially overlaps with the latter and partially constitutes it. Art expresses the pain and the joy, the hopes and the expectations of humans in concrete historical situations, and promotes the universality of freedom, recognition, and reconciliation.

### 3. Tsoclis' "Saint George" and the unity of the arts

Tsoclis' "Saint George" recalls a familiar theme in Christian-Orthodox iconography, namely Saint George slaying the dragon. Nevertheless, Tsoclis has enlarged the space of the artistic presentation, because he has transformed the original theme into a project demanding the creative cooperation of more visual arts, other than painting. In this impressive artwork, painting is realized as the source uniting the visual arts towards a common activity. Tsoclis created this artwork 1990 and presented it for the first time in the Arco di Rab gallery in Rome.<sup>7</sup>

The installation combines a painting and a sculpture. (No. 1). The painting shows Saint George on horseback, while the sculpture is about 18 meters in length and has the shape of a serpent. The almost "invisible" figure of Saint George emerges from the dark background of the painting. We see only his painted hand holding a real iron lance, and we see the horse; both are in hesitant gray and white colours. The iron lance extends outside the painting. The horse has turned its head to the direction of the sculpture-serpent and gives the viewer the impression that it is moving against the monster lying on the ground. The rectangular frame of the painting indicates, almost in a suprematist style, the metaphysical power of the frame of a sacred icon. It is the strong hand of the painted Saint George that initiates the miracle of the dynamic unification of visual arts. Surely, it does not initiate only the artistic miracle, as I shall explain later in this paper.

The sculpture-serpent is constructed of aluminum scales, while two monitors in function replace the eyes and continuously show pictures of human violence and of natural disasters. The iron lance setting off from the hand of the painted Saint George perforates the sculpture-serpent and in this way unites painting with sculpture.<sup>8</sup> Further, it unites painting and sculpture with the

<sup>3</sup> Hegel op. cit. p. 208.

<sup>4</sup> op. cit. pp. 229-230.

<sup>5</sup> op. cit. p. 250.

<sup>6</sup> op. cit. p. 248.

<sup>7</sup> Cf. Br. Corà, C. Tsoclis. Athens: Adam 2005 (in Greek), p. 132.

<sup>8</sup> Cf. Corà, o. c. p. 132.

video art, namely with a novel possibility of pictorial presentation. The sculpture-serpent is not constructed as an integrated whole through the elaboration of only one piece of material. Since the scales of the sculpture-serpent are constructed one by one, the artist has to screw them together, in order to "build up" the final shape. This process indicates the "tectonic" element of the artwork, remaining in the service of sculpture. Furthermore, the evident tectonic element of the installation results from the combination of the vertical represented by the iron lance with the horizontal represented by the serpent lying on the ground.<sup>9</sup> Therefore, Tsoclis' "Saint George" not only supersedes the "static painting", but it also presents the artwork as the dynamic, still open unity of the pictorial, plastic and tectonic elements.<sup>10</sup>

Comparing the semantic power of this artwork with Hegel's model of the dialectics of space in the arts, we ascertain a reversal. Hegel considered that the elaboration of space by the arts has already led to their separation. On the contrary, Tsoclis' "Saint George" declares the unity of the arts and their novel vindication of space. This artwork reconstitutes artistic space. While Hegel identified the beginning of the dialectics of space with architecture, Tsoclis' artwork brings painting to the fore as the fulfillment of this dialectics.

The installation belongs to the artist's collection and has been exhibited in different towns, museums, and galleries. During the 2004 Athens Olympic Games, it was exhibited without the painting in the Dionysios Areopagites pedestrianized street under Parthenon. (No. 2).

## 4. Cultural remembrance and artistic innovation

Since the title "Saint George" of Tsoclis' installation is the abbreviation of a religious narrative, we may point out that this artwork also connects the arts and literature, picture and word. So, the pictorial language of this artwork corresponds to the language of those narratives, myths, and symbols that have the archetypal core of a concrete cultural identity. Saint George on horseback slaying the dragon indirectly recalls the young hero on horseback, who is fighting against the monster. In both cases, the archetypal core is the perennial struggle of Good against Evil.

The representation of Saint George on horseback, slaying the dragon is only one of the iconographic types that have appeared since the ninth century A. D. The earlier type, which has also been preserved through the centuries, shows Saint George as a standing man having on the martyr's dress and holding the cross.<sup>11</sup> The later iconographic type of Saint George on horseback spread broadly in the Christian-Orthodox tradition after the thirteenth century. It can also be found in many Greek churches built up during the post-Byzantine era.

An icon of this type exists in the Byzantine Museum of Athens (No.3). It comes from Saint George's church in the

village Tzanata on the island of Cephallonia and is supposed to be a work of the early eighteenth century, painted by the deacon Andreas Karantinos from Cephallonia.<sup>12</sup> Scenes from his martyrdom encircle the central representation of Saint George. The figure of Saint George on horseback is elaborated in the details of the military dress, while the strong colours of golden, red and black give a majestic sign of victory, since Saint George has already perforated the neck of the dragon with his lance. Nevertheless, the melancholic face of the Saint points to his martyrdom. The waving red mantle, the painted Saint George holding the lance with both hands, the scared white horse raising his front legs and turning its head backwards, the blood from the neck of the defeated dragon indicate that the painter has grasped the "fruitful moment" of the action.

It seems that one of the reasons for the appearance of this iconographic type in the ninth century is the interest in Greek myths under the influence of the first Byzantine humanism. The narrative of Saint George's life was compared to the Greek myth of Bellerophon and, in this way, the pictorial representation of Saint George was enriched. According to Greek mythology, Bellerophon succeeded in taming the winged horse Pegasus, to ride it and to slay the fire-breathing monster of Chimera. Bellerophon's fighting is represented on an Attic red-figured pottery (*epinètron*) dating from about 430 B. C. (No. 4), that exists at the National Archeological Museum in Athens.<sup>13</sup> While art elaborates a novel form of representation within the Christian world, it serves as a strategy of cultural remembrance under changed circumstances. Furthermore, it preserves the continuity of culture and opens new possibilities of human creativity.

In spite of the argument of secularization, the image of Saint George slaying the dragon and liberating the princess from danger has been important for the spirit of the avant-garde during the first decades of the last century. Kandinsky interpreted this image as the symbol of spiritual freedom and artistic renewal. He painted "The Blue Rider", the picture on the cover of the Almanac, after he had created a series of paintings that have Saint George as their theme. The Blue Rider is Saint George devoted to the spirit of the avant-garde. (No. 5). Saint George protects the avant-garde presented as the princess at the right side of the picture. The dragon has disappeared, since the glorious victory of the avant-garde has been achieved. This picture symbolizes the victory of the avant-garde over the artistic traditionalism insisting on the representation of objects.<sup>14</sup> Following the path of the higher truth existing beyond appearances, Kandinsky introduces a metaphysical theory of reality in terms of artistic vision. He points out that the novel spirit of painting corresponds to the new spiritual realm, which is in the process of its novel formation. The new painting elevates the spirit beyond matter.<sup>15</sup>

Tsoclis' "Saint George" symbolizes the spirit of renewal in art in a different way. For, Saint George liberates painting from inertia and introduces vividness and movement into art. Tsoclis

<sup>9</sup> Cf. H. Wölfflin, *Kunstgeschichtliche Grundbegriffe. Das Problem der Stilentwicklung in der neueren Kunst*. Sechzehnte, unveränderte Auflage mit 123. Abbildungen. Basel Stuttgart: Schwabe 1979, p. 149.

<sup>10</sup> Corà op. cit. p. 123 is right in talking about the "static painting". However, I think that the "Saint George" has a broader meaning. Cf. K. Koskina, "Costas Tsoclis, the Wayfarer". *Tsoclis. A Retrospective*. Curator K. Koskina. Athens: National Museum of Contemporary Art 2002, pp. 35-47, here p. 45.

<sup>11</sup> There is also an iconographic type of Saint George on horseback that does not include the slaying of the dragon. Cf. N. Chatzidakis, "Saint George on Horseback 'in Parade'. A Fifteenth Century Icon in the Benaki Museum". *Thymiana in the memory of Laskarina Boura*. Athens: The Benaki Museum. 1994, pp. 61-65, with illustrations and bibliography.

<sup>12</sup> See the description by Chr. Baltogianni, "Andreas Karantinos: The Saint George". *Byzantine Museum. The New Acquisitions (1986-1996)*. Athens: The Byzantine Museum. 1997, p. 114 (in Greek).

<sup>13</sup> N. Yalouris, *Pegasus: Ein Mythos in der Kunst*. Ins Deutsche übertragen von A. L. Brakemaier: s. l.: Mobil Oil 1976 p. 30.

<sup>14</sup> G. Brucher, *Wassily Kandinsky. Wege zur Abstraktion*. München-London-New York: Prestel 1969, p. 379.

<sup>15</sup> W. Kandinsky, *Über das Geistige in der Kunst*. 10. Auflage mit einem Vorwort von M. Bill. Bern: Benteli 1973, p. 143.



No. 4. *Bellerophon killing Chimaira. Red-painted pottery, c. 440 B. C. Cf. N. Yalouris, Pegasus: Ein Mythos in der Kunst. Ins Deutsche übertragen von A. L. Brakemaier: s. l., Mobil Oil 1976 p. 30*



No. 3, *Saint George, icon (95 X 74 cm.), 18th century, Byzantine Museum of Athens. Byzantine Museum. The New Acquisitions (1986-1996). Athens: Byzantine Museum 1997 (in Greek), p. 115.*

takes a path back to the things. His symbolic realism intends to save the intrinsic truth of things, as well as the things themselves. Furthermore, he considers things as the elements of our context of life, and he indicates in his art their forgotten truth, which we have before our eyes and do not see. In this way, art does refer to the world, to nature and to society, and it is brought before both our sensual and our spiritual eye.

## 5. The uncertain reconciliation

It has been mentioned above that Tsoclis' "Saint George" resituates artistic space. We have to modify this statement, because the spatial locus of this artwork cannot be determined in a definitive way. The semantic polyvalence of this artwork corresponds to the "overlapping" of different spaces, while the artistic space remains prevalent. While art creates spatialization, it manifests the plurality of spaces and opens up localities for dwelling. Heidegger has emphasized that there is not only space,



No. 5. *W. Kandinsky, Almanach Der Blaue Reiter, 1911, coloured wood cut 32,5X 24 cm. private collection. 8863 Verlag Ilse Holzinger München ©VG Bild-Kunst, Bonn, 2003.*

but there are spaces.<sup>16</sup> Tsoclis' "Saint George" implies a step from the religious to the secular space. One could reverse this statement. The incommensurability between the sculpture-serpent and the painting is in favour of the frightening magnitude of the serpent. Nevertheless, the hidden figure of Saint George and the dark background of the painting intimate the dialectics of the visible and the invisible, of limited and the unlimited. There is a mystical element concerning the common source of religion and art located between the light and the darkness on the painting, since the illuminated, emerging hand of the invisible Saint George initiates the miracle of art.

It is surprising at first sight that the artwork is entitled "Saint George" but it does not represent the figure of Saint George. Further, the pictures of violence and disaster, which are shown on the two monitors, enlarge the meaning of the artwork. The sculpture-serpent indicates the dangers of contemporary life. The monster does not belong to mythology or to the religious narrative. It is a reality in contemporary society. Tsoclis once wrote that art should be interested in common problems.<sup>17</sup> While art presents the conflict among humans and against nature, it indicates the question about the possibility of reconciliation. Moreover, it points to the inevitability of human dwelling in face of the contradictions of our times. The artist, however, questions this inevitability and in his work he holds a mirror up to society, in which the viewer can see herself or himself and conceive her or his ambiguous situation in which one can see oneself and conceive one's ambiguous situation. In this way, the artwork vindicates its own place within the human world and points to human problems beyond art.

<sup>16</sup> M. Heidegger, *Kunst und Raum. L'art et l'espace*. St. Gallen: Erker 1969, pp. 6-7.

<sup>17</sup> Cf. Corà op. cit. p. 5.

## L'ART ET L'ÉROTISME COMME ESPRIT DE L'OEUVRE

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**1.** Ce papillon, cette fleur, ce parfum et cette couleur de cette rose, cette chaise, ce broc, ce paysage... Aucune reproduction, aucun dessin, aucune représentation, aucune photo ou description peut leur équivaloir dans l'expérience. Dans l'expérience chaque impression/sensation immédiate est pareille à soi-même, unique et irremplaçable, indicible et incommunicable. À chacun ses impressions/sensations. Nous ne toucherons pas en outre la question selon laquelle chaque sensation n'est jamais atomistiquement séparée, individuelle et abstraite, mais elle est le concours d'une multiplicité de facteurs, du donné objectif sensible à la mémoire de tout le passé qui presse sur le présent sollicité par la sensation même. D'autre part, déjà dans la perception comme conscience de la sensation, celle-ci n'est plus pareille; sentir c'est différent du percevoir, c'est-à-dire sentir de sentir, se rendre compte de la sensation et donc réfléchir sur elle. Rien équivalait ou reproduit la réalité du *hit et nunc* de l'expérience. On ne peut pas passer sous silence en outre que même l'indication que nous en donnons dans la forme du *hic et nunc* entraîne la référence aux catégories de l'espace et du temps (qui sont les conditions apriori de la connaissance sensible selon Kant), qui constituent la réalité de ce papillon, de cette fleur, de cette chaise et ainsi de suite, seulement dans la réflexion.

Savoir est saveur, disait Tommaso Campanella (*Del senso delle cose*, II,30): il n'y a rien dans l'intellect qui n'a pas été d'abord dans le sens (*Metaphysica*, I, 1). Savant est celui pour lequel les choses ont du goût (*sapiunt*), aussi comme elles sont, et la science ne consiste pas dans la connaissance des universaux (*Del senso delle cose*, II, 25). Le procédé abstraitif nous éloigne de la certitude du sens. Mémoire, intellect, raisonnement sont vérifiés et corrigés par le sens (*ibid.*, II, 30). La sensation est toujours vraie, l'on peut dire, même lorsqu'elle est fautive. On peut penser à Magritte: "Ceci n'est pas une pipe". Mais considérons le cas du mirage: aucun doute à propos de sa vérité. Seulement au moment de la réflexion suivante la sensation nous nous apercevons que l'objet du mirage, pas le mirage que néanmoins nous avons eu, n'était pas réel. Mais la réflexion ou la conscience d'elle n'appartient plus à l'expérience immédiate du réel.

Pour la certitude sensible l'immédiateté est essentielle, souligne Hegel (*Phénoménologie*, A, I, 1), mais comment est-il

constitué cet immédiat qui nous vient d'être indiqué? "*Maintenant*; comme il est montré, il a déjà cessé d'être. Le *maintenant* qui *est*, c'est différent de celui qui est montré, et nous voyons que le maintenant est proprement ceci: de n'être plus pendant qu'il est; le maintenant, comme il nous est montré, c'est un *déjà été*; et ceci est sa vérité; il n'a pas la vérité de l'être." (*ibid.*) Le ceci sensible "est *inaccessible* au langage, qui appartient à la conscience, à ce qui est en soi universel." (*ibid.*)

Mais vis-à-vis de l'unique connaissance possible, l'immédiateté sensible, on perd vraiment la possibilité de toute connaissance. On peut rappeler déjà la critique de Campanella à son sensualisme même: "Dans la sensation nous sommes aliénés de nous mêmes et transformés en quelque autre chose, nous devenons une autre chose." (*Metaph.*, I, 1) Nous ne voulons pas conclure par suite avec la reconnaissance de notre existence (Augustin, Campanella), ou de la substance du cogito (Descartes) ou du mouvement de l'Absolu (Hegel). Nous disons seulement que la multiplicité du particulier sensible, du *hic et nunc*, tend à dépasser sa limite et à chercher une unification ou un sens ou une vérité dans laquelle se retrouver ou se représenter.

Dans cette problématique un rôle important est joué par la faculté de l'imagination, comme faculté gnoséologique médiatrice entre la multiplicité particulière de la sensation et l'universel de l'intellect. Aristote définit, entre autre, l'imagination comme ce au moyen duquel nous disons que se produit en nous une "apparence" (*phantasma*) (*De anima*, III, 3, 428a 1-2) et comme une faculté avec laquelle nous jugeons et sommes dans le vrai ou le faux; elle est un mouvement ressortant des sensations en acte (*ibid.*, 429a 1-2), mais elle n'est ni science ni intellect. (*ibid.*, 428a 17-18) On ne comprend pas toutefois le procédé qui des particuliers conduit à l'universel, selon la définition de l'induction que donne Aristote même. (*Top.*, I, 12, 105a 11) Cette difficulté n'est pas résolue, aussi que l'on connaît bien, par Kant non plus, dont la proposition s'est révélée insatisfaisante, liée à la difficulté de déduction des catégories de l'intellect d'une part et à celle du fonctionnement du schématisme comme application des catégories à la multiplicité phénoménique de l'expérience, de l'autre.

L'idéal de la construction d'une connaissance scientifique valable pour toute expérience possible demeure un projet infier à cause de la découverte manquée d'une loi universelle

et nécessaire de subsumption/inférence du particulier; même si ce ne signifie pas que l'induction est un procès sauvage et arbitraire. La proposition dialectique, pas apodictique, de Ch.Sanders Peirce du procédé de l'abduction, c'est-à-dire de l'explication comme assumption d'une hypothèse, comme invention d'hypothèses explicatives, est à notre avis la plus digne de foi. Peirce met l'accent sur le caractère créatif et novateur de l'abduction, souligne M.Bonfantini: en elle s'exerce toute l'imagination créatrice du chercheur. Mais l'unique universel qui peut constituer une science absolue, qui selon Hegel ne peut pas être que l'universel concret, bien différent de l'universel abstrait de la logique formelle, demeure un problème ouvert, sinon d'utopique impossible solution.

D'autre part le procédé de recherche du sens, ou de la vérité si l'on veut, de l'expérience, de la réalité, du monde, de la vie, ne se déroule pas seulement dans la direction philosophique et scientifique, mais aussi dans celle de l'activité artistique. En fait l'imagination, considérée le plus souvent comme faculté reproductive, comme mémoire persistente de la sensation, même si lentement s'évanouissante, est conçue aussi comme activité productive, *facultas fingendi*, capable de combiner les données de l'expérience sensible, et comme fantaisie créatrice éminemment par les Romantiques. Déjà Vico avait indiqué les universaux fantastiques (qui ne sont pas les concepts logiques de l'intellect et de la science) comme création de la fantaisie à l'âge poétique de l'humanité.

Mais la fantaisie, aussi bien lorsqu'elle bâtit des mondes pas existants dans l'expérience et pour cela même qui sont lui alternatifs, comme des utopies ou des chemins à poursuivre pour adresser l'action à la constitution de sens nouveaux du monde, de la réalité, de l'expérience; même la fantaisie créatrice artistique (qui n'est jamais créatrice *ex nihilo* mais toujours d'éléments et données de l'expérience sensible) qui opère librement en fonction d'une nouvelle interprétation et de la recherche d'un sens nouveau dans le monde, n'opère qu'une synthèse probable et hypothétique, pour proposer une conduite et un comportement de vie, et ne prétend pas d'atteindre une solution définitive.

Même si les procédés de l'art sont différents de ceux du savoir (gnoséologie, logique, théorie) et l'argumentation rhétorique (forme, métaphore, symbole et d'autres figures – et pourquoi pas dialectique?) caractérise, si l'on peut dire ainsi, plus proprement l'activité artistique; et même si différents sont les buts, le but cognitif-théorique du savoir, et le but pratique, pour agir dans l'éthos, de l'art: une parfaite induction n'est pas atteinte par l'art non plus. Les deux activités développent une fonction régulatrice et non constitutive vis-à-vis de l'expérience et de notre condition/situation d'hommes dans le monde de la vie.

2. Nous avons jugé nécessaires ces mises au point préalables avant d'aborder le discours plus spécifique de la sensualité et de l'art. Il vaut néanmoins essayer aussi d'éclaircir à grands traits certains concepts, dont la définition est nécessaire pour une orientation plus précise et plus correcte afin de l'illustration de notre thème.

Je crois que l'on peut dire que la sexualité c'est une fonction élémentaire essentielle de l'être vivant aussi que respirer, se nourrir et dormir, et donc qu'elle ne peut pas être éliminée. Faire semblant d'ignorer l'existence de cette fonction est im-

possible: cacher, empêcher ou contraindre la satisfaction d'un de ces besoins élémentaires signifie empêcher la vie même à son origine. Il est juste alors que nous rappelons que Freud non seulement souligna l'importance de la libido comme manifestation pulsionnelle, mais qu'il avertit aussi la difficulté d'éviter les conséquences mauvaises de cette pulsion (*Das Unbehagen in der Kultur*, 1929). Simplifiant, la vie en communauté entre les hommes eut un double fondement: la coercition au travail, créée par la nécessité extérieure, et la puissance de l'amour. Mais la corrélation entre l'amour et la civilisation au cours de l'évolution cesse d'être univoque: d'une part l'amour s'oppose aux intérêts de la civilisation, de l'autre la civilisation menace l'amour avec des lourdes restrictions. La civilisation impose des grands sacrifices (constitution du sur-moi et sentiment de culpabilité) à la sexualité et à l'agressivité innée de l'homme, lequel a de la peine donc à trouver en elle son bonheur. En effet, si une tendance pulsionnelle est soumise au refoulement, ses parties libidinales se transforment en symptômes, ses composantes agressives en sentiment de culpabilité. Toute l'évolution civile se configure alors, par analogie avec les névroses individuelles, comme la lutte entre Éros et Mort, entre pulsion de vie et pulsion de destruction.

C'est pourquoi que selon Freud la pulsion libidinale doit être modérée si l'on veut que se constitue la vie civilisée, l'organisation de la civilisation sans laquelle survie est impossible. Le problème fondamental est selon Freud si Éros pourra s'imposer dans la lutte avec son adversaire pareillement immortel: le destin de l'espèce humaine de fait demeure un problème ouvert, à propos duquel on ne peut pas se prononcer.

Selon G.Bataille le risque de toute institution, et pas seulement le risque, est sa transformation en un pouvoir dictatorial, contre lequel il revendique la reconquête de la liberté du négatif. On sait que selon Bataille l'humanité se constitue comme telle au-delà de l'animalité, lorsque la sexualité, comme fonction reproductive, se constitue en érotisme, comme recherche psychologique indépendante du but naturel de la reproduction. La découverte du travail, c'est-à-dire la fabrication d'outils pour pouvoir à la subsistance, freudienement argumente Bataille, entraîne l'institution positive d'interdictions qui bloquent la sexualité et contre lesquelles agit la transgression pour la libération du négatif, raison pour laquelle l'érotisme paraît comme violence et comme mort. Même si Bataille implique, contrairement à ses prémisses de lutte contre tout positif, une conception absolutiste du négatif, je tiens à souligner sa condamnation explicite soit de la cruauté soit de la négation de toute forme d'interdiction, sans laquelle serait impossible la survivance même de l'homme et il y aurait sa négation absolue. La transgression confirme l'importance de l'interdiction pour la constitution de la société, même si demeure ouverte la question si l'homme porte en soi d'une façon irréductible la négation de ce qui a fondé l'humanité même.

Nous croyons aussi bien que la nomadologie de Deleuze et Guattari a une valeur seulement polémique vis-à-vis des systèmes coercitifs et dictatoriaux, les "systèmes arborescents", et que le rhizome, à travers lequel le désir rayonne et produit, constitue l'alternative à la fossilisation structurelle et à l'abstraction dogmatique, alternative à laquelle on doit se référer continuellement pour fonder à nouveau notre action dans le monde, dans le centre vivant de l'expérience in fieri. Mais une chose c'est dire que nous sommes dans un monde

que nous ne connaissons pas et que nous nous trouvons face à la précarité de l'expérience, dont nous cherchons une organisation qui oriente notre action pratique; autre chose est, métaphysiquement, donc positivement et pas négativement, au-delà des intentions des deux auteurs, affirmer que la réalité est désir-rhizome d'où tout prend son origine, à laquelle on doit sans cesse se référer et dans laquelle on doit continuellement vivre. On risque encore une absolutisation. Le rhizome est comme l'herbe, disent les auteurs, qui ne se plie pas aux lois de la culture. Pareillement la sexualité libérée du rhizome n'est pas soumise à la reproduction, dans les vicissitudes des agencements qui constituent les mille plateaux de la réalité. (*Mille plateaux. Capitalisme et schizophrénie*, 1980) Il paraît que cette, en vérité mythique, origine de la réalité et du monde opère une satisfaisante toujours se renovante manifestation du désir. Il semble que l'appel au rhizome évite toute violence aggressive désormais sans aucun risque de pulsions destructives et entraîne le règne d'une liberté heureuse. Mais il n'est pas clair pourquoi il y a dans le monde l'arbre et le système arborescent, hiérarchique, bureaucratique, si racines et arbres mêmes pour leur origine doivent être ramenés au rhizome d'où ils pareillement découlent. La difficulté de la réalisation, sans contradictions, du désir, ne peut pas être niée. Toutefois, d'autre part, c'est important de rappeler que, dans un entretien, Guattari déclare nettement de n'être pas partisan "de la pure spontanéité, de l'anarchie, du désordre, de la libre expression des passions dans leurs formes les plus violentes et brutales." (*Intervista*, 1977)

Nous croyons qu'on peut alors conclure ce deuxième paragraphe avec le souhait d'une culture et d'une civilisation comme rationalité régulatrice, toujours se renouvelante, et de sa fonction médiatrice entre arbitraire et interdiction dogmatique, entre instinctivité et contrainte imposée par tout pouvoir. Vis-à-vis de la sexualité originaire, d'autre part, on peut concevoir sensualité et érotisme comme équilibre et liberté éclairée, comme un domaine qui se place entre l'extrême contradictoire réalisation immédiate des impulsions, la destructive spontanéité absolue, et leur répression ou négation la plus restrictive

3. Mais, qu'est-ce que l'art a affaire à tout ça? L'art, à mon avis, "joue" un rôle ironique entre la sexualité sans frein et la contrainte de la société, désignant une règle possible de comportement; prenant ses distances soit vis-à-vis de la pulsion immédiate, d'une part, soit du raidissement dictatorial dogmatique et coercitif des institutions sociales, de l'autre. Toujours ayant l'œil au contexte historique dans le domaine duquel il se place, et sur la base duquel doit être considéré, jamais jugé arbitrairement.

De ce point de vue on peut lire *L'âne d'or* d'Apulée comme une défense de la sensualité érotique, ou mieux comme son élevée idéalisation (pensons aux amours de Lucius et de Photis, ou mieux encore à ceux de la belle matrone avec l'âne-Lucius lui-même), contrairement à la sexualité vulgaire et élémentaire (les vicissitudes de Socrate et des magiciens, les prêtres Corybantes) ou à la violence des passions qui emportent les gens jusqu'au crime (les femmes assassines). On peut lire Apulée comme une confirmation du malaise de la civilisation, mais racheté selon l'éthos de son époque dans une perspective religieuse, celle du culte libérateur d'Isis. Cette perspective néo-platonicienne atteint son expression la plus

haute dans le conte d'Amour et Psyché, qui de la beauté du corps s'élève jusqu'à la beauté de la conquise liberté de l'âme. Une fable dans laquelle l'amour se présente comme sensualité érotique et comme équilibre harmonieux au-delà de l'erreur de la passion (Psyché ne résiste pas au désir d'admirer le dieu), d'une part, et libéré de l'oppression des interdictions des dieux (les avatars de Psyché pour retrouver le dieu), de l'autre. On ne doit pas oublier en outre que de Psyché et Cupidon naît la Volupté, le plaisir comme reconnaissance à juste titre de la sexualité sublimée dans l'éthos de la civilisation. Du profane à la reconnaissance du sacré, on pourrait dire. C'est-à-dire de la condition originaire, dans laquelle on subit violence et on est des victimes, à la condition de celui qui ne s'oppose pas mais se pose dans le sacré, reconnaissant la nécessité d'une règle de coutume à suivre en fonction du bonheur de la vie individuelle et sociale.

On peut voir cette défense de la sexualité reconnue et sublimée dans un contexte social, contre toute répression et oppression, dans le *Décameron* de Boccace, à une époque dans laquelle, avec la dernière transformation du Moyen-Âge, surgit et croît une nouvelle société moderne, avec l'exigence de trouver un nouvel éthos global. Prend forme à cette époque même l'opposition à la fausseté de la négation du sexe et la défense d'un amour sensuel utopiquement idéalisé comme première réalisation du bonheur humain. Avec un aimable sourire et une délicate ironie Boccace accompagne ses personnages à la sereine joie de l'amour: Catherine désire entendre chanter le rossignol c'est-à-dire désire coucher toute seule sur la terrasse où fait monter en cachette son amoureux, Masetto simulait d'être muet et est aimé par toutes les sœurs et le couvent se transforme en peu de temps en une pouponnière, le moine Rustico apprend à mettre le diable dans l'enfer à la belle Alibech, qui l'aime beaucoup et qui ne voudrait jamais cesser; Nastagio degli Onesti est témoin des conséquences tragiques pour qui ne seconde pas le sentiment de l'amour érotique. Les équivoques et l'imprévu sont la farce de l'amour: pensons à l'arbre des hallucinations, à l'échange des lits entre les deux amis et les femmes du patron à l'auberge du Mugnon, aux culottes du prêtre à la place du voile sur la tête de l'abbesse, à l'étonnant enchantement de la jument, aux femmes qui se jouent des maris. D'autre part les difficultés de la vie quotidienne ne sont même pas oubliées (les neuf maris de la fille du Soudan) et le sens attentif des réalités connaît aussi les amours avec une fin malheureuse (l'histoire des trois sœurs marseillaises, celle tragique d'Isabelle). Mais nous ne pouvons pas oublier que les choses du *Décameron* arrivent dans le contexte de la terrible peste de l'an 1348, dont la description constitue l'arrière-plan ineffaçable où acquiert sens tout son monde. Enfin, c'est la confirmation de ce que nous avons dit, voilà dans la conclusion la défense de l'auteur, contre l'accusation de "troppo licenzia usata" (trop de licence): ce qui est dit honnêtement ne messied à personne; toute chose est bonne en soi, mais nuisante si mal employée.

La même condamnation de la répression sexuelle nous trouvons dans le *Roland Furieux*: la condamnation de la phallogratie antiféministe du tyran Margaron et celle du féminisme anti-phallograte de Orontée et des femmes devenues homicides pour se défendre contre le sexe masculin. On peut lire la défense de la libre expression de la sexualité désormais reconnue dans le conte de Fiammetta, qui trompe avec un troisième amoureux, dans le même lit, Joconde et le roi Astolphe, des-

quels elle est maîtresse, ou dans les étreintes de la reine et du nain. Mais la passion est classiquement condamnée lorsqu'elle confond la liberté avec l'arbitraire et change l'homme en un être sans raison, le réduisant à l'état animal: c'est l'île enchantée et la tromperie d'Alcine.

Toutefois une nouvelle réalité historique et sociale, un nouveau coutume, un nouvel éthos, montrent que les choses ne vont pas exactement aussi que nous pensons et désirons. L'attention réaliste à la vie quotidienne c'est un aspect important de l'imagination artistique même avec l'Arioste: coups de théâtre et imprévu pointent les amours et les vicissitudes de Guenièvre et Ariodant, Isabelle et Zerbine, Olympe et Biren, Fleur-de-Lys et Brandimart, Richardet et Fleur-d'Épine. Et la passion et la luxure pressent jusqu'à la méchanceté, aussi que l'on peut voir dans les vicissitudes de Guenièvre, et au meurtre, aussi que témoigne l'histoire de Gabrinda, et oubliant tout respect de la vie civilisée. Singulier est d'autre part le triomphe de l'avarice, du désir d'argent, sur la pulsion sexuelle même, comme dans les contes du chevalier de la coupe et d'Argie et Adonio. Et si fondamentalement le *Roland Furieux* c'est un chant à la beauté, à la jeunesse, à la sensualité et à l'amour, à la joie de la vie, c'est même le chant d'une idéalisation reportée à plus juste mesure: l'amour est aussi folie (Roland) et superficielle banalité (l'apparition d'Angélique est suffisante pour que les preux chevaliers, paladins chrétiens et sarrasins, perdent la tête). Angélique d'ailleurs se conduit comme une belle oie, coquette superficielle et narcissique, dans un monde où elle paraît comme un inconsistant et fuyant mirage.

La nouvelle époque humaniste est parvenue à son plein développement et avec la pleine Renaissance montre désormais ses limites. C'est l'âge de Machiavelli: vertu et fortune, la vertu de l'homme ne suffit plus à construire son destin, mais il a besoin aussi de la fortune, très réalistiquement reconnaît le Secrétaire florentin. Avec le développement de l'époque moderne et contemporaine la lutte pour le monopole religieux et politique de la sexualité s'articule et s'alourdit, et, par contre, la lutte pour la libération sexuelle va risquer le dogmatisme et l'arbitraire. La littérature érotique s'articule de plus en plus dans une polémique serrée dont la portée n'engage pas seulement la simple opinion, les idées générales répandues, mais surtout le sens de la vie et de l'organisation sociale.

Dans cette perspective on pourrait faire justement une distinction entre la littérature comme description ou argumentation et intention manifestement polémique, et l'art comme intentionnalité précatégorielle vouée à la recherche d'une reconnaissance équilibrée de la réalité positive de la sexualité et de ses manifestations même les plus immédiates. De ce point de vue il nous paraît que toute l'œuvre de D.H. Lawrence a été une bataille contre l'ignorance et la répression et une recherche continue d'un idéal partagé système de vie, qui détourne les excès extrêmes de l'arbitraire et de la négation. Même si ça n'enlève rien à la validité et au signifié de la bataille de Lawrence, il nous paraît néanmoins que son œuvre, et donc aussi son couronnement *Lady Chatterley's Lover*, se dispose sur le plan de la recherche et de l'intention consciente, plutôt que sur celui d'une complexe problématique intentionnalité précatégorielle qui agit en amont de la création artistique, comme par exemple chez Joyce ou Proust. *Lady Chatterley* paraît, dans toutes ses rédactions, plutôt comme un roman pédagogique voué à soutenir une thèse morale, ou mieux à la recherche et à la poursuite d'un coutume et d'un éthos idéals.

Malgré l'attention critique à la réalité pratique du contexte social et la condamnation des aspects négatifs de la société industrielle, toute perdue dans la course à l'argent, Lawrence semble absolutiser certaines situations idéales de la rencontre érotique jusqu'à l'utopie (il parle de tendresse et de sensualité) et ses personnages paraissent, abstraitement, plutôt comme des types, sinon des stéréotypes, d'un certain comportement utopique, que comme symboles d'une complexe réalité problématique en acte, où la question érotique se place comme dans son terrain le plus propre.

Entre la satisfaction brutale et la répression sexuelle, entre le déchaînement de l'arbitraire et l'oubli qui cache le sexe, entre la réactivité immédiate et la phobie-du-sexe, toutefois l'art paraît poursuivre la recherche d'un chemin de l'amour comme sensualité érotique sereinement reconnue et veçue et comme équilibre, facteur de bonheur individuel et d'harmonie sociale. Cette intentionnalité précatégorielle, qui ne doit pas être confondue avec une intention consciente, accompagne toute création artistique et toute œuvre d'art comme engagement voué à l'action pratique, à changer le monde, d'abord et au-delà de toute défense ou formulation idéologique préalable, et au-delà de toute vision du monde plus ou moins personnelle et subjective. Avec l'ironie qui lui empêche d'être impliqué, l'art développe un discours d'ensemble dans la précarité de l'expérience et avance une proposition d'action dans la totalité du contexte humain et social de l'éthos contemporain et actuel.

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# ART AS DEREALIZATION<sup>1</sup>

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## 1. Introduction

In *The Art Question*<sup>2</sup> Nigel Warburton defends the view that all the answers given to the question 'What is art?' by XXth Century art theories, that developed aesthetical, procedural, institutional, historical, functionalist, representational arguments, failed. Warburton argues, therefore, that a general theory of art is impossible. By general theory he meant a theory that could give us a classificatory definition of art, i.e., a definition, which excludes evaluative elements and which tells us the way to distinguish, without any possibility of failure, an art object or event from other objects and events in the world. So, concludes Warburton, the only possible solution is to empirically judge each time the individual cases.

I am not happy with this alleged solution. Or, better to say, it does not seem to me a solution at all, but a mere reiteration of the problem. Indeed, if you do not have a criterion, that criterion that makes it possible to judge the individual cases, I do not see how could it be possible to consider something as an artwork.

Hence, we face the following dilemma: from one side it seems, that every theory of art, which aims at giving a classificatory definition of art – i.e., a kind of definition, that provides the necessary and sufficient conditions for something to be an art work –, fails (as Warburton properly showed); but from the other side, to consider an object or event as art or not is completely arbitrary without a general criterion. How can we get out from this *impasse*?

My proposal is as follows: to find a criterion, which permits us to say that something is an artwork, without demanding that the criterion gives necessary and sufficient conditions to define something as art in the classificatory way.

## 2. Derealization in phenomenological aesthetics

You can find this criterion, for instance, in the phenomenological aesthetics of 20<sup>th</sup> century. Philosophers like Sartre, Hartmann, Ingarden, Dufrenne and others considered art under the idea of "derealization"<sup>3</sup>; according to them, the experience of art makes us free from the "real world" through an act of derealization that leads to the establishment of worlds that are different from the one we live in. As a consequence, artworks are primarily imaginary, unreal objects, and not objects of the real world.

Roman Ingarden writes for example:

*"We are then almost inclined to believe in their reality [the reality of artworks], and yet, due to the aesthetic attitude, we never believe this with complete seriousness. It is precisely this disposition for a reality acceptance that never reaches serious consummation, that is always held back at the last moment, as it were, that forms the special nature of aesthetic attitude and carries with its unique simulation we get from dealing with works of art in general and with literary works in particular. 'Real', yet not real in earnest; breathtaking, but never as painfully so as in the real world: 'true', and yet only 'imagination'."*<sup>4</sup>

Hence, the reality of artworks is not the reality of the ordinary objects of the real world. It is an imaginary, fictional reality. According to Hartmann, the artwork (as aesthetical object) is the "Erscheinung für die Erscheinung", the appearance for the appearance. In other words, the artwork provides an experience, which we use to call "aesthetic experience", which rises through the 'putting in brackets' the natural belief in the reality of the world. As Husserl, the father of phenomenology, wrote in a letter to Hugo von Hofmannsthal<sup>5</sup>, aesthetic experience is then a kind of non-philosophical application of the

<sup>1</sup> This paper is part of the project «Derealización»: para una teoría de los fenómenos artísticos, I develop in the Universidad de Murcia, thanks a grant offered by the Secretaría de Estado de Universidades e Investigación del Ministerio de Educación y Ciencia (Spain), Programa Nacional de ayudas para la movilidad de profesores de universidad e investigadores españoles y extranjeros (ref.: SB2004-0101). My participation at the II Mediterranean Congress of Aesthetics could be possible thanks the finantiation of the CIRM of the University of Udine (Italy).

<sup>2</sup> N. Warburton, *The Art Question*, Cambridge 2003. For a first introduction in contemporary (analytical) philosophy of art, see N. Carroll (ed.), *Theories of Art Today*, Madison, University of Wisconsin Press, 2000.

<sup>3</sup> Hartmann introduced in his work the notion of "Entwirklichung" in order to explain the ontological dimension of the artwork, that should be free from the laws of the reality. S. N. Hartmann, *Aesthetik*, Berlin, De Gruyter, 1953.

<sup>4</sup> R. Ingarden, *The Literary Work of Art* (1931), tr. eng. George G. Grabowicz, Evanston, Northwestern University Press, 1973, p. 342.

<sup>5</sup> E. Husserl, (1906) *Brief an Hofmannsthal*, in: *Sprache und Politik, Festgabe für Dolf Sternberger*, Hrsg. von C.J. Friedrich, Heidelberg, 1968.

phenomenological method, which proceeds putting offside the existential attitude towards the things, in order to capture their essence.

This view, -first appeared at the beginning of the XX century-, never really disappeared from the philosophical scene and recovered new force in the last decades of the XX Century -. As in Arthur Danto's characterization of art in terms of the "bracketing effect"<sup>6</sup>. According to Danto, an artwork requires a response that is different from the one deserved by real things; towards an artwork we do not act in the same way as we act towards a real thing; for example, in front of an artwork we do feel emotions, but the emotions felt let us react in a different way from the way we act when these emotions are felt in 'real' situations. If, for instance, you are in a cinema hall, watching to a murder scene, you do not run away from the hall, you do not go out shouting for help/help; you do not call the police. Rather, you remain rather seated, entangled in the drama illusion, and maybe you start eating your popcorns in a more compulsive and voracious way. On the contrary, at the beginnings of the cinema era, people sitting in the halls run away like crazy, when they saw a train running against them at full speed, in order to not be knocked down by it: they did not acknowledge the image as such, they saw it as something real, and reacted in the corresponding way. To put it differently, the audience did not have an aesthetic experience and did not acknowledge an artwork as artwork, just because the derealization effect was not generated<sup>7</sup>.

Hence, the question I would like to deal with is the following: is this idea of derealization understood in terms of the "bracketing effect" a good way to understand art? Does it really capture our experience of art? Can it help us to define art? I think that the idea of derealization does help us to understand our art's experience, but it can not be used to define art in terms of necessary and sufficient conditions. This means that it cannot be considered neither as a condition, -which every object or event must satisfy in order to be artworks-, nor as a condition that grants that what satisfies it, is an artwork<sup>8</sup>. It is not neither a necessary nor a sufficient condition for something to be an artwork, but only a way to understand what happens to us and with things, when we experience things and talk about them in terms of artworks. It is not a sufficient condition, because there can be other phenomena, not being artworks, having this derealizing feature or quality. It is not a necessary condition - although somebody could think that I am indeed trying to interpret the notion of derealization a necessary condition of art -, because, if you want to argue in terms of necessary conditions, you will certainly get enmeshed in a circular sequence of definitions. For once the definition "something is an artwork, if it is connected with an experience of derealization" is produced, you should define "derealization"; but you could define "derealization" in a productive way,

only by presupposing what an artwork is. -¿por qué? ¿No es posible que de una definición de desrealización que no contenga el término "obra de arte" si puedes definir así el término desrealización, no hay ningún problema de circularidad? For instance in the following way: "The experience of derealization is the experience of reality as appearance. This is an experience you have when you consider it aesthetically, i.e. with distance or disinterestedness. It is the experience in which you suspend your everyday judgements about the world". Until to this point everything is right. But if you would like to know better in which factual conditions you customarily make this experience, in order to explain it more precisely, you will probably answer: "It is the experience provided by objects or events (intentionally or not) produced or performed in order to raise such a derealizing effect. Those objects or events are artworks or they are events and objects that, in your appreciation of them, you consider as if they were artworks". Therefore something is an artwork, if it is somehow connected with an experience of derealization and an experience of derealization is the kind of experience that is somehow raised or produced by artworks or by events or objects considered as artworks. Not a big result indeed. If you would think to use the notion of derealization as a necessary condition of the definition of something as artwork, you would be involved in an evident *petitio principii*. (esto no es verdad, esta claro que si defines desrealización así estás incurriendo en una *petitio principii* pero ¿por qué la defines así? Defínela como, por ejemplo, "una experiencia de desrealización es una en la que suspendemos nuestros juicios habituales acerca de..." O lo que sea, in necesidad de meter el término arte por ningún lado!!!! Es un *petitio principii* solo porque tú lo defines ya introduciendo el término obra de arte.

It is therefore now necessary to explain what does the term 'derealization' means. A possible argument to explain this feature could be provided by someone who claims that artworks have a deficient ontological status. Let's call it the naive platonic argument. However, this argument is not valid in general. Indeed in experiencing an artwork, you experience an improvement of reality. Through the experience of artworks we understand better the world we live in better; we discover aspects of things that are otherwise hidden or blurred. We see (or hear, or touch) the reality in a different way. And we experience emotions in a way that let us know better a particular kind of emotion. Perhaps because an artwork faces us with a particular emotion in a clear way we never experience in real life. Nonetheless, we somehow know that this emotion is certainly a real one, but, maybe precisely because of the way it is expressed, it is different from the emotions we have in 'normal', 'real' life. Therefore, we may say that we experience a different reality, often a surplus of reality<sup>9</sup>.

Analogously, if we consider not the experience of artworks, but the being of artworks as objects, we cannot deny that artworks are real objects in the world (for the obvious, trivial reason that there is only one reality and -pace Beatle's song *Strawberry Fields Forever*, which states that "nothing is real"! - ev-

<sup>6</sup> See A. Danto, *The Philosophical Disenfranchisement of Art*, New York, Columbia University Press, 1986; A. Danto, *Beyond the Brillo Box. The Visual Arts in Post-Historical Perspective*, University of California Press, 1992.

<sup>7</sup> This means, that they did not assume the 'correct' attitude towards the picture. I agree with J. Searle and J.-M. Schaeffer: the difference between a fictional and a real representation is pragmatic, rather than semantic. See J.-M. Schaeffer, *Pourquoi la fiction?*, Paris, Seuil, 1999, Chapter III, § 5.

<sup>8</sup> Cf. S. Davies, *The Philosophy of Art*, Oxford, Blackwell, 2006, pp. 26-28. A Wittgensteinian criticism to the idea that art can be defined in terms of necessary and sufficient conditions is offered by Tilghman, in his *But is it art? The Value of Art and the Temptation of Theory*, Oxford, Blackwell, 1984.

<sup>9</sup> A further reason why the naïf platonic argument is not valid is that it is not clear at all that the 'thing' Plato called can be indeed identified or not with what we call art. See L. Wiesing, "Platons Mimesis-Begriff und sein verborgener Kanon", in L. Wiesing, *Artifizielle Präsenz. Studien zur Philosophie des Bildes*, Frankfurt a.M., Suhrkamp, 2005, pp. 125-148. For a criticism of Plato's art censure, see also J.-M. Schaeffer, 1999, Chapter I, § 2 & 3.

everything, in a very trivial sense, is real. Everything in the world, everything that happens, is real: hence, in this very trivial sense, also illusions and appearances are real. If the whole reality were an illusion, a dream, it would nonetheless be real: a real illusion). But what real objects and events like artworks express, represent, present, mean or do has the mark of irreality<sup>10</sup>. What is happening through the artwork is not really happening: it is happening only as represented, as expressed, i.e. it is only appearing. In other words, the way it is happening is its appearing, and this makes the big difference between any 'real' object or event and an object or event as artwork. The derealization is therefore the effect of the artwork as artwork<sup>11</sup>.

According to the advocates of phenomenological aesthetics, artworks are intentional objects, which could not exist – as artworks – without the relation with perceptive subjects. Indeed an artwork is only appearance: its being is only the way it appears to a spectator, a reader, a listener. It is an object constructed or an event performed only for the sake of its appearance. The appearance, that is the ontological status of the artwork, should not be understood as a perceptual illusion: it is neither private nor idiosyncratic; on the contrary it can be and it is intersubjectively shared<sup>12</sup>. Therefore the derealization provided by the artwork can be distinguished from – say – the irreality-effects of drugs<sup>13</sup>.

### 3. Distance, disinterestedness and liberation: a transcendental approach

The strategy I am trying to put forward, with the help of the notion of derealization, is to explain what an artwork is, through the particular kind of experience it arouses. It is a traditional move: traditionally art has been defined by the aesthetic experience it provides.

An artwork is then, as G. Genette claimed<sup>14</sup>, an object with aesthetic function, i.e., an object or an event, which is made or performed just in order to provide an aesthetic experience<sup>15</sup>. And aesthetic experience is precisely what I am trying to capture with the notion of derealization. Nevertheless there is a big discussion among philosophers about the notion of aesthetic experience. There are many different interpretations of the very concept of aesthetic experience. For example, the one of John

Dewey: according to Dewey every successful experience is an aesthetic one. To put another example, Monroe Beardsley's account of aesthetic experience in terms of unity, complexity and intensity<sup>16</sup>. In my opinion, is nonetheless much more interesting and productive to understand aesthetic experience through the concepts of *distance* and *disinterestedness*, as a very large number of theorists (Jerome Stolnitz, Edward Bullough, but also Genette, and others<sup>17</sup>) did or do, renewing ideas of great thinkers of the past like Addison, Shaftesbury and especially Kant. If we can understand those concepts, then we will be able to clarify the notion of aesthetic experience in a satisfactory way. And if we will clarify this notion, we will get a good criterion to understand objects and events as artworks.

Nonetheless, nowadays critics of the notion of aesthetic experience seem to prevail. It is well known – for instance – that George Dickie considered the concept of aesthetic experience as a "myth", i.e., as an invention produced by some philosophers, that lacks rational justifications and sharable empiric grounds<sup>18</sup>. Dickie's criticism is based precisely upon the refusal of the notion of disinterestedness. According to Dickie, the notion of disinterestedness can not explain our art's experience, because we are indeed very interested in the art-object. Of course, Gerard Genette has already shown, that Dickie's criticism of the notion of disinterestedness depends upon certain a confusion of analytical aesthetics does between the job of the critic of art and the common people appreciation of art<sup>19</sup>. On the other hand, Dickie has a strategical reason to make his move: he needs to judge the aesthetic experience based upon the notion of disinterestedness as a myth, in order to support his institutional approach<sup>20</sup>. Dickie's criticism of the idea of disinterestedness has nevertheless a point in common with other criticism to this concept. Thus, together with Dickie, Arnold Berleant and Noel Carroll regard this notion in psychological terms.

<sup>16</sup> Cf. J. Dewey, *Art as Experience*, New York, Perigee Books (1934); now in: *The Collected Works of John Dewey*, ed. by J.A. Boydston, 37 voll. (Carbondale: Southern Illinois University Press, 1967-1991). Cf. M. Beardsley, *Aesthetics: Problems in the Philosophy of Criticism* (1958), 2nd ed. Indianapolis, Hackett Publishing Company, Inc., 1981; M. Beardsley, *The Aesthetic Point of View*, Ithaca, New York, Cornell University Press, 1982.

<sup>17</sup> Cf. E. Bullough, 'Psychical Distance' as a Factor in Art and as an Aesthetic Principle, in: "British Journal of Psychology" Vol. 5, 1912, pp. 87-98 and 108-117. Cf. J. Stolnitz, "The Aesthetic Attitude", in J. Stolnitz, *Aesthetics and the Philosophy of Art Criticism* (New York, Houghton Mifflin, 1960, pp. 32-42); J. Stolnitz, *On the Origin of Aesthetic Disinterestedness*, in "Journal of Aesthetics and Art Criticism", Vol. 20, 1961, pp. 131-144 (the three articles are reprinted in G. Dickie & R. Slafani (eds.), *Aesthetics: A Critical Anthology*, New York, St. Martin's Press, 1977).

<sup>18</sup> G. Dickie, *The Myth of the Aesthetic Attitude*, in "American Philosophical Quarterly", Vol. 1. 1964, pp. 56-65 (reprinted in G. Dickie & R. Slafani (eds.), *Aesthetics: A Critical Anthology* (New York, St. Martin's Press, 1977). Cf. <http://users.ox.ac.uk/~sca2183/Unkantian.PDF#search=%22george%20dickie%20myth%20aesthetic%22>.

<sup>19</sup> G. Genette, *L'Œuvre de l'art. II. La relation esthétique*, Paris, Seuil, 1997, pp. 39-40.

<sup>20</sup> It is well known, that the criterion of Dickie's art definition is the 'artworld'. The last version of Dickie's "institutional theory of art" offers the following circular definition: "A work of art is an artifact of a kind created to be presented to an artworld." "A public is a set of persons the members of which are prepared in some degree to understand an object which is presented to them." "An artist is a person who participates with understanding in the making of a work of art." "The artworld is the totality of all artworld systems," and "An artworld system is a framework for the presentation of a work of art by an artist to an artworld public." (G. Dickie, *Introduction to Aesthetics: An Analytic Approach*, New York 1997, S. 92). I have criticised the ideological nature of Dickie's art theory in the paper: *Anerkennung der Kunst – Anerkennung durch Kunst*, in C. Asmuth (Hrsg.), *Leiblichkeit, Interpersonalität, Anerkennung. Transzendentalphilosophie und Person*, Bielefeld, Transcript, 2007.

<sup>10</sup> Cf. J. Mitterschling, *The aesthetic experience and the 'truth of art'*, in "The British Journal of Aesthetics", 28, 1988, pp. 28-39.

<sup>11</sup> I take the expression "as artwork" in Nelson Goodman's sense (cf. N. Goodman, "When is Art?", in N. Goodman, *Ways of Worldmaking*, Indianapolis, Hackett Publishing, 1978, pp. 57-70). For example a picture is an artifact, which can be enjoyed as artwork, but it can also be used, for instance, as a table, as a blanket, or... as ironing board. I will return on this possible use of an artwork at the end of present paper.

<sup>12</sup> Cf. M. Seel, *Ästhetik des Erscheinens*, Frankfurt a.M., Suhrkamp, 2006, p. 11.

<sup>13</sup> This is an objection that can be made against J.-P. Sartre's theory of art. According to J.-P. Sartre, the proper artwork is not the real thing we use to indicate as artwork, but the "image" of it in the mind of the perceptive subject. Such a theory has lot of inconveniences we need to avoid. In particular, it would be impossible to refer to the same thing as an artwork. Each individual would make her own artworks (not her own interpretation of the unique artwork) in her mind, and at the end the experience of art would be an unsharable solipsistic and incommunicable experience. Art would be only the doorway to idiosyncratic paranoid visions (sometimes it is really that, but fortunately not always!). Cf. J.-P. Sartre, *L'Imagination* (1936), Paris, PUF, 1989.

<sup>14</sup> G. Genette, *L'Œuvre de l'art. I. Immanence et transcendance*, Paris, Seuil, 1994, p. 10.

<sup>15</sup> For a discussion about the notion of the aesthetic experience see Bohdanh Dziemidok, *Controversy about the aesthetic nature of art*, in "The British Journal of Aesthetics", vol. 28, 1988, pp. 1-18.

I summarise the argument of Dickie, Berleant and Carroll. The notions of distance and disinterestedness are "impediment[s] to aesthetic understanding", because the very intense perceptual attention required by the appreciation of art, "does not [...] require separating and isolating the art object or excluding our purposes and goals [...]": there are indeed "elements of function and consequence in every artistic occasion"<sup>21</sup>. According to Berleant, disinterestedness and distance are deceptive ways to describe our art's experience, because they reduce the aesthetic situation to the psychologic dualism of perceiver and object, a wrong solution that excludes the social dimension of art in order to acquire anan universality, which is impossible, because why it is abstract and it has nothing to do with real life<sup>22</sup>.

In my opinion, at the basis of this criticism against the notion of disinterestedness lies a fundamental misunderstanding. The way Dickie, Berleant, and Carroll explain the notion of disinterestedness shows that they do not capture the Kantian meaning of disinterestedness, which is not psychological, but transcendental. That is, it has to do with the conditions of possibility of the aesthetic experience, not with a particular kind of psychological experience. Kant uses the notion of disinterestedness to explain that having an aesthetic experience does not mean to be interested in the existence of the object, but only in the way it appears, or, to put it in another way, we are interested in the object (or in the performance) only as representation, as image. As Nick Zangwill noted "Kant's idea is that the pleasure is disinterested [and therefore aesthetic] when its existence is in no way bound up with desire (that is, a concern with real existence). We might put the point in more contemporary language by saying that disinterested pleasure has a desire-free 'causal-functional' role." Therefore "Kantian disinterestedness has nothing to do with the conscious mental state of *being interested* or of *finding something interesting* which is opposed to *being bored* or *finding something boring*"<sup>23</sup>. Kant wrote indeed<sup>24</sup>:

*"All one wants to know is whether the mere representation of the object is to my liking, no matter how indifferent I may be to the real existence of the object of this representation".*

In my opinion, the link between Kant's notion of disinterestedness and the phenomenological idea of derelization is clear enough. Surely an aesthetic experience can have, and usually has, cognitive, moral, social, psychological import, function or connection. But, as aesthetic experience, it is disinterested in Kantian sense: we do not mind whether it what is represented, expressed, presented or performed is real or not, we only care about its appearing<sup>25</sup>.

When we define art through this concept of aesthetic experience we do not deny that art has social, moral, cognitive, or psychological functions at all. Art has those functionthose functions only if it is considered in the proper way and the proper way is aesthetic, i.e., with distance. This distance is not psychological, but semantic<sup>26</sup>. As Richard Lind suggested, we must therefore distinguish between "significant meaning" and "informative meaning". For this second kind of meaning concerns only the informational character, the fact that a novel, a representation, or whatever is about something, that inhibits the artistic-aesthetic functions in order to satisfy non-artistic functions. The significant meaning is on the contrary bounded to the formal and aspectual properties of what we experience and has a distancing effect<sup>27</sup>. This is not to say, that the experience we are dealing with has nothing to do with knowledge or with some kind of contents. This means solely that it is not caused by contents or knowledge. It is maybe useful to clarify this point with an example. What you are interested in about television news or newspaper is that they inform you about the world. What matters is that they tell you how are the events, the facts, although, certainly, every television program or newspaper tell the facts from the politic, economic, social point of view of the publishing concern, and chooses the facts that should be communicated on the basis of that point of view. The aesthetic aspects of the ways the news are presented are normally less important, although it is evident that you can reflect on the way certain aesthetic devices are used in a more or less subliminal manner in order to defend a certain interpretation of the events. On the contrary, in reading a novel, also a realist one, it does not matter – in the first instance –, that the related events really happened or not. What matters, is the

<sup>21</sup> A. Berleant, *Beyond Disinterestedness*, in "The British Journal of Aesthetics", Vol. 34, 1994, pp. 242-254: here pp. 243, 248, 249.

<sup>22</sup> Cf. also N. Carroll, *Aesthetic Experience revisited*, in "The British Journal of Aesthetics" Vol. 42, 2002, pp. 145-168. Carroll tries to determine what is the aesthetic experience is, without refusing the concept as a myth, like Dickie. He analyses the ways aesthetic experience is been traditionally understood and finds three principal approaches to it: "affectively oriented approaches", "axiological approaches", and "content-oriented approaches". The typical axiological approach understands the aesthetic experience in terms of experience of something having intrinsic value or value for its own sake. The content-approach tries to distinguish the specific object of aesthetic experience. The affectively-oriented approach is based on the concept of disinterestedness. Carroll is favourable to the content-approach, that approach that considers the formal features of something as the object of aesthetic experience. He refuses the axiological approach, because according to him aesthetic experience has a function in our evolution; and he refuses also affectively-oriented approach, because, according to him, it reduces the aesthetic experience to the experience of the beauty based on the notion of disinterestedness: according Carroll this notion can be useful to explain the aesthetic judgement, that should be impartial and impersonal, but not the aesthetic experience which is based on feelings. The reasons of Carroll's refusal of the notion of disinterestedness are the same of Berleant: "[...] most art, along with its accompanying aesthetic experiences, in most cultures is scarcely disinterested, nor is meant to engender a disinterested response, in the Kantian sense, but rather is in the service of religious, political, moral, and otherwise social enterprise" (N. Carroll, 2002, p. 151). A criticism of Carroll's paper is offered by Robert Stecker (*Aesthetic Experience and Aesthetic Value*, in "Philosophy Compass" 1, 2006, pp. 1-10), which defends an aesthetic theory of art according to which art is something valuable for its own sake.

<sup>23</sup> N. Zangwill, *Unkantonian Notions Of Disinterest*, in "British Journal of Aesthetics", Vol. 32, 1992, pp. 149-152; Reprinted in Paul Guyer (ed.) *Essays on Kant's Critique of Judgement* (URL: <http://users.ox.ac.uk/~scat2183/Unkantonian.PDF#search=%22George%20Dickie%20myth%20aesthetic%22>)

<sup>24</sup> I. Kant, *Critique of Judgement* (1990), Oxford, Clarendon Press, 1928, p. 43.

<sup>25</sup> Also the content-approach to aesthetic experience, that according to Carroll is the only valid one, does not work, if you forget this phenomenological and kantian transcendental dimension of disinterestedness and derelization. Carroll's view is that the properties we have to consider in order to appreciate an object aesthetically are "Gestalt" properties, such as symmetry. These properties are, according to him, "response dependent, because their existence depends on creatures like us with our sensibilities and imaginative powers". He utilises the concept of supervenience to explain what are those properties: "They supervene on the primary and secondary properties of object attention, as well as upon certain relational properties, including art-historical ones [...]" (Carroll, 2002, p. 166). In other terms Kant's notion of disinterestedness Carroll threw out of the door, comes back through the window. The supervenient properties Carroll has in mind to describe the aesthetic experience are indeed aspectual properties, properties that has to do not with the existence and the reality of the object, but with their relationship with subject. They are phenomena. See also R. Stecker, 2006.

<sup>26</sup> Even if the origin of the difference between significant and informative meaning is pragmatic, i.e. it depends on an attitude we assume toward the semantic content.

<sup>27</sup> R. Lind, *The Aesthetic Essence of Art*, in "The Journal of Aesthetics and Art Criticism", Vol. 50, No. 2, 1992, pp. 117-129, here p. 126.

narration of the events, are the *related* events, the events in the narration and the way the events are told. And the fact that something happened it is important only in the case it plays a role in the whole artwork. You can obviously search, in a given novel, information about the world: for example you can use it as a document of an historical age. But in this way you do not see it as a work of art, but as a source of information. Analogously, the cognitive elements help you to enjoy the artwork in a more satisfactory way, but you do not encounter an artwork in order to get information about those cognitive elements. You rather experience the artwork in order to enjoy it, including its cognitive elements, aesthetically. In other words, there is an aesthetic intentionality in the experience of an artwork, which is demanded – so to say – by the artwork itself.

Hence, there is no contradiction in considering the aesthetic experience as simultaneously disinterested and sympathetic, as Carroll claims<sup>28</sup>. The disinterestedness does not exclude – on the contrary it implies – the psychological attention to the aesthetic-aspectual properties, i.e. properties that the art-object (or event) has only in relationship with an experiencing subject living in an intersubjective frame. And the intentional production of the art-object or art-performance presupposes that the object is only to be shown.

I can offer another example to explain what I mean. A Ducati motorbike has a lot of features: some of them are aesthetic. If you consider only the aesthetic features, that is, only features that concern its appearance in order to be appreciated, then you consider it as artwork, and we can judge it artistically. But this means to put in brackets some other important qualities and features of the motorbike as existent object, like its speed, its social importance as status symbol, etc., concerning its reality as social object, as mean of transport, and so on. If you consider it as artwork, you need to isolate its aesthetic features. You can do this move putting the motorbike in a museum or simply regarding it without considering its function as transport, etc., but paying attention only to its aspectual, phenomenal, features and this means: derealising it in a way in which we are not interested in its existence, but only in its appearance as “candidate for appreciation”<sup>29</sup>.

We have, therefore, two de-realizing ‘movements’. From the one side, the art-object is an object which arouses a derealising effect, transferring us, say, in the dimension of the appearance, of the fiction, of fictional worlds: therefore it drives us away from the real life, because it has the mark of derealization

or irrealization: it is only to be shown. From the other side, we consider something aesthetically, only if we consider exclusively its appearance, i.e. only if we derealise it, turning it away from its function as object in the world and paying attention only to its appearance.

In this sense, because of this derealizing effect, we can say with some philosophers like Schopenhauer and Marcuse, that art “serve the cause of human liberation”<sup>30</sup> because “the work is [...] taken off the constant process of reality and assumes a significance and a truth of its own”<sup>31</sup>. Not only absolute music (as P. Kivy thinks<sup>32</sup>) but art as art arouse a sense of liberation from reality and the opening of new reality dimension, because its essence is to be appearance. Art faces us with irreality, unreality; it frees us from reality, opens up fictional worlds<sup>33</sup>, and creates new forms of communication and sociability<sup>34</sup>.

## 4. Conclusion: Rembrandt or iron board?

In this paper I have tried to recover the phenomenological notion of derealization in order to explain art and art-experience. I have shown that art can be explained as derealization because the art-object interests us only for its appearance. Therefore, art cannot be understood without the frame of a particular kind of experience, that experience that we can understand in terms of distance and disinterestedness. Distance and disinterestedness are notions that can still be productive to understand why art has a certain power to free us from the needs of reality, although through art we do have profound views of certain aspects of reality and our life. Through art, as derealization, we understand that reality can change, because reality is not a thing in itself, but a (conceptual, social, economical) construction grounded on intersubjectively shared beliefs. Because of its derealizing power, art shows that reality is constructed. Therefore it help us to enjoy and understand

<sup>28</sup> N. Wolterstorff, *Why Philosophy of Art cannot handle Kissing, Touching and Crying*, in “The Journal of Aesthetics and Art Criticism”, Vol. 61, 2003, pp. 17-27, here p. 22.

<sup>29</sup> H. Marcuse, *The Aesthetic Dimension. Toward a Critique of Marxist Aesthetics*, Boston, Beacon Press, 1978, p. 8. On Marcuse’s and Schiller idea of autonomy of art see my paper *Arte, experiencia estética y liberación*, in « Acta del I Encuentro de filosofía de la fundación Casa Pintada La educación estética: arte moderno y democracia », in print.

<sup>30</sup> Cf. P. Kivy, *Philosophies of Arts: A Study in Differences*, Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 1997. N. Zangwill (*Are There Counterexamples to Aesthetic Theories of Art?*), in “The Journal of Aesthetics and Art Criticism”, Vol. 60, 2002, pp. 111-137) criticises Kivy’s idea of the differences between the art on the basis of a defense of the aesthetic theory of art.

<sup>31</sup> In this context I prefer to use the notion of *fictional* instead the one of *possible* worlds. Kendall Walton distinguishes the two concepts of ‘fictional’ and ‘possible’ worlds as follows: a *possible* world can be fictional but also real and it needs to have some characteristics, that not all fictional; a *fictional* world can be possible, but also impossible, and it is not real (cf. K. Walton, *Mimesis as Make-Believe. On the Foundations of the Representational Arts*, Cambridge (Ma) – London, Harvard University Press, 1990). This distinction is also defended by D. Lewis (*Truth in fiction*, in “American filosofical quarterly”, XV, 1978, pp. 36-46), L. Dolezel (*Mimesis and possible worlds*, in “Poetics today”, vol. 9, n.3., 1988, pp. 475-496), R. Howell (*Fictional objects: how they are and how they are not*, in “Poetics”, VIII, 1979, pp. 129-178), and J.-M. Schaeffer (1999, Chapter III, § 5): they argue that fictional worlds, unlike possible ones, can be incomplete, semantically not homogeneous and can be produced without any formal restriction procedure. Nonetheless this distinction can be nevertheless understood as rather blurred. For instance Gerard Villar (*Las razones del arte*, Madrid, La balsa de la medusa, 2005) upholds the irrealizing dimension of art, arguing that it has the power to create ‘possible worlds’ (like E. Franzini in his: *Arte e mondi possibili*, Milano, Guerini, 1994).

<sup>34</sup> See G. Vattimo, “L’arte dell’oscillazione”, in G. Vattimo, *La società trasparente*, Milano, Garzanti, 1989.

<sup>28</sup> Cf. N. Carroll, *Art and the Domain of the Aesthetics*, in “British Journal of Aesthetics”, Vol. 40, 2000, pp. 193-208.

<sup>29</sup> A motorbike can be regarded as artwork because of its aesthetic properties as derealization-makers. Therefore you do not need some kind of institutional recognition in order to consider it as an artwork. The Ducati example is proposed by Derek Matravers in a paper on proceduralist theories of art (*The Institutional Theory: a Protean Creature*, in “The British Journal of Aesthetics” Vol. 40, 2000, pp. 242-250). The expression “candidate for appreciation” is quoted from G. Dickie (*Art and the Aesthetic. An Institutional Analysis*, Ithaca/London 1974, S. 34), but the aim of my use of it is not a defense of Dickie’s institutional theory it, but, just on the contrary, a radical criticism of it. Regarding the relationship between aesthetic attention and aesthetic appreciation, I agree with G. Genette. According to him “[...] l’attention aspectuelle est une condition, nécessaire mais non suffisante, de la relation esthétique, la quelle ne s’établit qu’en la présence d’une autre condition: l’appréciation esthétique – ou peut-être, plus précisément ou plus simplement, la question de l’appréciation esthétique. En sorte que l’attention esthétique serait définie comme une attention aspectuelle anime par, et oriente vers, une question d’appréciation – ou, ce qui revient au même, comme une question d’appréciation [...] posée sur la base d’une attention aspectuelle [...]” (G. Genette, *L’Œuvre de l’art. II. La relation esthétique*, Paris, Seuil, 1997, p. 16).

some (more or less profounds, significant and important) aspects of it.

This view of art has in my opinion some significant advantages:

- It offers a way to understand art in general: not only the art included in the so-called "arts-system" – that was approximately settled itself approximately from during the XVII-XVIII centuries –<sup>35</sup>; this is to say, that it can help you to appreciate and understand pre-historical rock graffiti, Chinese and Japanese tea ceremony, Indian ragas, as well as Holly- and Bollywood cinema, ancient Greek architecture and sculpture, Italian Renaissance peinture, XX century Jazz, rock and dodecaphonic music, videogames, and all that you want... if it can be enjoyed with distance and disinterestedness and can raise a derealization experience.
- Therefore it can also account for the reason why any ordinary object can be regarded as artwork. In other words, it offers an account for the readymade problem, an account which is in my opinion better than the one offered by Dickie's institutional theory and other proceduralistic theories.
- It can account also for the questions raised by postmodern thinkers, who argue, that we are living in an aesthetization-age, in which every fact and event is transformed into show, every object is changed into an image, so that the difference between art and life is allegedly deleted. According to the thesis I have defended, only those practices, that maintain or produce a difference, at least a conceptual one, between art and life, art and reality, are artistic.
- Finally, it give us a way to escape from the assault of artmarket and avoid the simplifications and categorizations of art history, without refusing art history and without ingenuously forgetting that art has always inevitably been a social product, connected with the economical and productive relations and structures of the society.

Nonetheless, I have finally to admit that the concept of derealization is vague. And explaining a vague, but intuitively sharable concept like art with the help of a maybe vaguer and stranger concept like derealization could appear as a completely wrong strategy. If my intention would have been to provide necessary and sufficient conditions to define art this objection would find its target. But I will not provide these conditions and I think on the contrary that these can not be provided. Indeed I do not think that is possible nor neither possible nor productive to furnish such a classificatory definition of art. To say that something is an artwork means to confer this artifact or event a particular status. It means to acknowledge its (aesthetic) value. In other terms, the analytical distinction between classificatory and evaluative definitions can not works in the case of objects like artworks, whose being *in itself* depends upon the value they have *for us*. This is to say, that to understand something as art means to make a reflective, not

a determinant judgement: it means to reflect upon the feeling produced in the subject by the object or the event, insofar as for its form, its aspectual properties, its appearance, meet an indetermined universal intersubjective purposiveness, which is not given, but must be sought in the individual cases. You have no universal rule to determine the individual cases, but only individual cases, individual objects and events, which are judged on the basis of their capacity to give rise to an intersubjectively shared experience, that I have described in terms of derealization and disinterestedness and called "aesthetic experience". If those objects and events give rise to such experience and this experience, and the intentionality (that can be also unconscious) to give rise to this experience is (at least part of) the reason why they are produced, they are artworks. Therefore, we can understand the aesthetic experience as a kind of "background condition" of art-experience<sup>36</sup>. And the notion of derealization and its correlates (opening of possible worlds, distance, disinterestedness and disinterestedness) seems to me to open up a good way to interpret our intuitive understanding of the art-experience as an aesthetic experience.

1970 Marcel Duchamp<sup>37</sup> forestalled the functionalist theory of art developed by Nelson Goodman in *Ways of World-making*<sup>38</sup> – according to which an artwork is an artwork, only if it functions as such<sup>39</sup> – and said that to use a Rembrandt's painting as an ironing board would be the reciprocal gesture of the exhibition of a pissoir as artwork – a job, in which Duchamp was an expert. Maybe because I am not very good in ironing, I however think that is better to use the Rembrandts as artworks, rather than as ironing boards, and this means to contemplate them aesthetically, without changing them into ironing boards: unless, because of some strange catastrophic event, whose terrible violence and dreadful cosmic amplitude neither I can nor I want even imagine, Rembrandt's painting becomes the only possible ironing board in the world. Then, faced with the dilemma if using the painting as ironing board, thus concretely risking to destroy it, or rather going around wearing a wrinkled shirt, we would be brave, or arrogant, enough to consider – in such a destroyed and desolate world – the experience raised by the ironed shirt a more satisfactory aesthetic experience than the experience produced by the contemplation of the Rembrandt's painting. That would be the very end of art ... But it would not matter a lot: due to the circumstances in which such a world would be, nobody would certainly bear more derealization.

<sup>35</sup> Cf. R. Schusterman, *The End of Aesthetic Experience*, in "The Journal of Aesthetics and Art Criticism", Vol. 55, 1997, pp. 29-42.

<sup>37</sup> M. Duchamp, "Ready-Mades", in H. Richter, *DADA: Art and Anti-Art*, New York and Toronto, Oxford University Press, 1978, p. 89.

<sup>38</sup> See N. Goodman, "When is Art?", in N. Goodman, *Ways of Worldmaking*, Indianapolis, Hackett Publishing, 1978, pp. 57-70.

<sup>39</sup> Goodman's thesis is however more complicated. From the one side he argues that "[...] a Rembrandt painting may cease to function as a work of art when used to replace a broken window or as a blanket." From the other side, he states that "the Rembrandt painting remains a work of art, as it remains a painting, while functioning only as a blanket" (*Ways of Worldmaking*, pp. 67 and 69). I argue, that if the Rembrandt painting functions *only* as a blanket, it is no more an artwork.

<sup>35</sup> See P. O. Kristeller, *The Modern System of the Arts: A Study in the History of Aesthetics*, in: "Journal of the History of Ideas", vol. 12, 1951, pp. 496-527, and 13, 1952, pp. 17-46; L. Shiner, *The Invention of Art: a Cultural History*, Chicago/London, University of Chicago Press, 2001.

# REFLECTIONS ON AESTHETIC EXPERIENCE AND THE NORMATIVE CLAIMS OF AESTHETIC JUDGEMENT<sup>1</sup>

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## 1. Introduction

The recent increase in the debate about the nature of aesthetic experience and the normative claims of aesthetic judgement is not independent of the problems defining art, and the apparent absence of criteria for artistic value as a result of the huge pluralism that exists in our time. This link could be explained by the fact that the modern concept of art, seeking autonomy and lacking any utility, defines art as aiming for aesthetic value.<sup>2</sup> But aesthetic value does not seem to be essential to make an object a piece of art. Historically art has had, and of course still has, other functions than the aesthetic one, such as religious, political, moral or entertainment. Certainly, much of the art production in the second half of the twentieth century<sup>3</sup> and many philosophers in the last decades have defended the separation between aesthetics and art. However, there are also many reasons to relate art and aesthetics, and particularly I would like to point out those which could have caused renewed interest in aesthetic value and criteria. The current doubts about the definition of art and artistic canons are about the value of art itself, and aesthetic value, although based on an aesthetic experience and so traditionally related to subjective appreciation, is about a response caused by an object and directed to it. In this paper, I will outline a view of aesthetic experience and its relation to aesthetic judgment, on which a defense of aesthetic value and its relevance for the evaluation of art could be based.

## 2. The nature of Aesthetic Properties

Among the reasons to distrust aesthetic value as criteria for artistic value I will focus on its apparent subjectivism. Aesthetic value derives from experiences of objects whose

properties cause pleasure or displeasure on the perceivers. These experiences are expressed in judgements currently called "judgments of taste." But taste describes a disposition to the ability to discern and assess aesthetic properties as well as take pleasure in certain objects and works of art. Therefore, as happens with food,<sup>4</sup> the exercise of taste involves a mixture of perception and pleasure. The concept of taste emphasizes the subjectivity of aesthetic reactions. Taste is exercised in a direct, immediate way; it requires a first-hand experience and pleasure is necessarily felt by a subject. However, judgements of taste are also about objects; they refer to putative qualities of objects (using terms such as "serene", "powerful", "graceful", "balanced", "delicate", "garish", and so on) that can be noticed and enjoyed by others<sup>5</sup>. So the "problem of taste" points to the difficulties for a subjective judgment to become a critical one. As Carolyn Korsmeyer puts it, the "problem of taste" has always harboured an uneasy tension between the necessity of critical standards for judging art works and the fact that those standards rely upon the subjective responses of the individuals appreciating art, which are notoriously variable" (2001, 193). And that was the problem that inspired most of the debate on early modern aesthetics.

Nowadays, the discussion about the normative claims of aesthetic judgement focuses on the existence and nature of aesthetic properties perceived and identified in aesthetic experience. This question is central to the so-called "aesthetic realism"<sup>6</sup>. As Benjamin R. Tilghman describes it, "aesthetic realism is offered as a way of overcoming aesthetic disagree-

<sup>4</sup> Carolyn Korsmeyer (1999) has studied the origins of the "metaphor of taste" that translates the literal meaning of taste from food to art. She observes that the close connection between taste and pleasure forges the first use of the metaphor. In her book she also critically analyses the process that separates literal meaning of taste from a more refined pleasure appropriate to aesthetic appreciation.

<sup>5</sup> Notice that I focus on such judgements that assess properties, different to those that merely express global opinions: "I like it", "I love it", "I do not like it", "I hated it". Aesthetic properties are meant to attribute aesthetic value based on the object's features. Also, from this perspective, "beauty" could be considered too inespecific as an aesthetic quality, expressing the general response of somebody who favorably appreciates the combination of the different aesthetic properties in the object.

<sup>6</sup> Frank Sibley's work on aesthetic properties is considered inspiration for many realists although others protest against realist interpretation of Sibley's position (see, Benson (2001) and MacKinnon (2001)). Certainly, the article he published in 1959 broke new ground and invigorated the debate about the old problem of taste.

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<sup>2</sup> See Shiner (2001).

<sup>3</sup> Very many of the recent artistic reactions, mainly from the sixties, rise against that idea of an autonomous art that justifies itself aesthetically. Very often this is due to the association of that conception of art with "disinterest" as proper aesthetic attitude. Aesthetic value caused by an aesthetic experience that generates disinterested pleasure seems to be ideologically detached from any moral or political concerns, or simply from life.

ment and combating all forms of subjectivism ... with its thesis that aesthetic qualities really exist and the judgments about them are genuine statements of fact" (2004, p. 248). Realists usually defend the ontological status of aesthetic properties saying that they supervene upon nonaesthetic ones. Supervenience has become a very controversial issue, a matter of intense debate. But my reasons to reject aesthetic realism have to do mainly with an important aspect of the realist account of aesthetic properties. Realism seems to defend aesthetics properties as purely descriptive. Realists are aware that the most common aesthetic terms have both a descriptive and evaluative component, but they claim that the first is the essential one.<sup>7</sup> It would be easier to reach an agreement on the descriptive component than it would be on the evaluative component that depends on affections. They are probably right on this, but the problem I see is that understanding aesthetic properties in this neutral way, realists empty them of value. Tilgman says that realism is "primarily a matter of recognizing the presence of properties ... just as one can identify various species of motor cars without having any particular concern for them ... without any of what we think of as characteristic aesthetic reactions" (2004, 255-6). I agree with him. Realists want to reduce aesthetic properties to their objective component and treat them as objective properties. But they are not objective. I don't think the problem of taste is solved eliminating one of the components of aesthetic responses, any solution would have to face the particular relation between them that defines the aesthetic.

I have explained my objections in a previous paper<sup>8</sup>, so I will not discuss realism here any further. Therefore, my view is committed to the nature of aesthetic properties, both descriptive and evaluative, that makes them expression of a particular value.

### 3. Aesthetic experience

Aesthetic properties have an objective component but they are not objective; they are relational properties that depend on the response of a subject to the objective properties. There are many different theories about what an aesthetic experience is, and many sceptical objections to the very idea of it as a specific kind of experience, that I cannot pursue here.<sup>9</sup> Instead, I will summarize the views that seem wiser to me.

I follow Alan Goldman in his description of aesthetic experience as that one in which we fully exercise our sensory, cognitive and affective capacities in the appreciation of objects, particularly works of art. That is, aesthetic experience is intense and concentrated but its hallmark is "a theme traced from Kant through Dewey: the full engagement of all our mental capacities", perceptual, cognitive, and affective, simultaneously (2001, 188). When we perceive an object aesthetically our perception is at once cognitive and affective, we feel pleasure or displeasure, satisfaction or dissatisfaction. Then the experience doesn't have to be always positive (we can experi-

ence negative properties as well: ugliness, dullness, and so on).

It should also be pointed out that aesthetic experience is intentional, directed to an object (or certain aspects of it). But our attention is guided by what – following Beardsley – we can call the "phenomenal object"<sup>10</sup>. This is not the psychical object, although the physical object is obviously necessary. Aesthetic experience is not caused by the physical object but by the *representation* of the object as having aesthetic properties, relational properties, and the satisfaction or dissatisfaction we feel does come from that representation, not from the object itself. And so, our evaluation will depend on the fact that we find those properties valuable or not.<sup>11</sup>

Aesthetic experience is a specific human experience in which we attend to the object as an object of contemplation. We have an aesthetic attitude when we are interested in the enjoyment of the object itself, no matter which possible concerns there may be in a further use of our practical affairs. This attitude is traditionally labelled by the (often argued paradoxical) concept of "disinterest". But we do not have to assume the formalism usually associated with the concept, because when we perceive objects aesthetically we attend not only to their sensuous or formal properties, but also to their expressive qualities and symbolic meanings. So we can see them as cognitive meaningful objects. In a work of art, medium, form, and content all always have aesthetic significance and the value of a work of art will depend on them and the way they relate to each other (Goldman 2004, pp. 102, 104). Consequently, we do not have to understand the pleasure or displeasure provided by aesthetic experience in a narrow sense, it provides enjoyment, refreshment and enlightenment<sup>12</sup>, and that makes it intrinsically valuable<sup>13</sup>.

## 4. Aesthetic experience and critical judgement

So, aesthetic properties are perceived in an aesthetic experience, one in which our mental capacities are simultaneously and fully engaged by an object. It is then an intentional experience, directed to an object that we represent in a certain way. A realist would say that the properties we focus on when experiencing the object aesthetically supervene upon its physical ones, but in order to avoid ontological realistic claims, I rather interpret – following Tilgman – these properties as "aspects seen" in the objects.<sup>14</sup> So, two people's aesthetic appreciations would conflict, when seeing the same object, they don't see the same aspects. Could they reach an agreement? Could one make the other see the same aspect one sees and both agree that it is the appropriate aspect? According to Tilgman yes, we can alter other people's perception in order to bring one to

<sup>10</sup> Beardsley (1958), ch. 1.

<sup>11</sup> See Schaeffer (2000), p. 50. Though I don't agree with Schaeffer about *purely* affective nature of aesthetic properties.

<sup>12</sup> See again Goldman (2001), p. 188.

<sup>13</sup> In the way that Malcolm Budd opposes intrinsic value to instrumental value (1995, p. 5), not to external value.

<sup>14</sup> Tilgman himself follows Wittgenstein. The famous example of the ambiguous figure of the duck-rabbit illustrates this notion of perception of aspects. However, two observations should be made. First, Wittgenstein thought that aspects were not properties of the object but an internal relation between them and other objects [Tilgman (2004), p. 254, n. 8; see also (1987) pp. 188-9]. Secondly, because of the affection involved in aesthetic appreciation, Tilgman does not think that the duck-rabbit is a proper example of the "elusiveness" of the aesthetic perception, and of its "imponderable evidence". Tilgman (2004), pp. 258-9.

<sup>7</sup> See Levinson (2001). Of course, the ontological thesis of supervenience follows the same track since supervenient properties depend upon non-aesthetic properties, such that objects with the same non-aesthetic properties must have the same aesthetic properties.

<sup>8</sup> Carrasco (2006).

<sup>9</sup> For a summary of contemporary approaches to the issue see Carroll (2006). As relevant critics see, Urmson (1957), Dickie (1964), Danto (1981).



see the thing in a certain way. Although radical changes of taste might need a similar "radical readjustment in his view of the world" (Tilghman, 2004, p. 257)

This conclusion points to the fact that aesthetic experience is informed. Two people can interpret the same object differently; in their respective representations, the objects could have different aesthetic properties to which these people would respond affectively, and consequently they could have different evaluations. However, the point is that their evaluation is connected "conceptually" (nor physically or psychologically) to the interpretation they make. They feel satisfaction *when* grasping, for example, the correct design, and vice versa.<sup>15</sup> Now, the representation they make of the object could be considered correct or incorrect according to certain interpersonal criteria. Although certain natural capacity is needed for aesthetic perception<sup>16</sup>, at least since Hume, knowledge and familiarity with art are accepted<sup>17</sup> as conditions to improve our aesthetic judgements. In fact, that is how we learn aesthetic terms referring to properties which are meant to be worthy. Tilghman thinks that these cultural conditions for judgement do not work as casual conditions but as "conditions of intelligibility"<sup>18</sup>. Aesthetic properties are relational, partly constituted by our responses. But in Goldman's words: when we are fully engaged by the aesthetic object we do not simply pay close perceptual attention to it but also bring to bear "one's cognitive grasp of those external and historical relations that inform one's aesthetic experience" (2001, p.191). That knowledge can inform one's experience of a work and *only then* is it aesthetically relevant (*Ibid.*).

In this view, knowledge and familiarity, and –as Hume noticed too– practice, make us more receptive to the relevant aesthetic qualities that would emerge experiencing a work of art. In a humean perspective, Ives Michaud (1998) has shown how standards of taste arise from convergent aesthetic appreciations. Inside of what he calls a "community of evaluation which is articulated with a community of production" and about certain axiologically appreciated objects certain common culture is developed and it generates criteria that, given any aesthetic judgements, will allow to assess them as correct or incorrect. Aesthetic values are learnt inside particular – in wittgensteinian terms – "language games"; in fact, according to Michaud, we could not have the right experience without entering in a certain language game. Therefore, we can learn to identify and affectively react to certain qualities, which are the "objective counterpart" but decided by convention (*Ibid.*, pp. 26-7).<sup>19</sup> History of art works identifying certain artistic qualities, but other practices would work in the same way (Michaud's examples: how to become an expert in Tony Cragg's sculptures, Spanish horses and rap music). Aesthetic judgement is at once personal and expressed in a shared language, more or less specialized. Our taste is not innate, spontaneous, or natural, it is the result of a training process in

different language games that shape it; the "language games of evaluation that also are the language games of perception and feeling" (*Ibid.* p.33). David Hume pointed to this double process of education and elaboration that involves, and should involve, both artistic qualities and aesthetic experience or feeling. The process is, of course, very complex and dynamic and it will demand practice, comparison, and attention to others' viewpoints. Just as artists learn their skill (*Ibid.* p. 38). Nevertheless, none of this excludes evolution and changes in the language games.

So, when judging and claiming the reliability of our aesthetic judgments we play the role of qualified critics (Goldman, 2004, p. 99). Appealing to the notion of ideal critics, Hume captured the normative force of aesthetic evaluations, and explained its limits; even competent critics conflict, and very often, indeed. Knowledge and familiarity would improve our taste meanwhile prejudice (historical and cultural relativism) or differences in our personal character will be causes of conflict. Hume had to reconsider some of the initial conditions of the standard of taste as its limits. They are at the heart of the problem of the standard of taste, but the point is that any standard will come from them (Michaud, 1998, p. 93). I think that Tilghman expresses the very same idea when pointing out that "aesthetic and artistic evaluation can run deep in human life making connections with wider human relations and morality.... It can connect us with our own history and culture and in addition, it can connect us personally with one another" (2004, p. 259). Agreement is then important to us but we also know that there is always room for disagreement, and it doesn't have to be necessarily negative as sometimes diversity in taste and appreciation is in fact valued (*Ibid.*).

## 5. Aesthetic value and the value of art

Given all the factors that shape taste, we should always have to admit the possibility of disagreement, and even certain aesthetic relativism. There isn't a closed list of artistic properties and the value of aesthetic qualities cannot be fixed by any principles, because it will depend on their interactions with other qualities of the objects, so even experts would disagree. But it is a fact that we have aesthetic criteria working in many different domains. So subjectivism should not be a worry that would stop us recognizing standards of taste<sup>20</sup>. I have followed Michaud's account that, in postmodernist scenery and considering the subjective aspects of the issue, it makes sense of aesthetic criteria as linked to the aesthetic judgements that come from aesthetic experiences. Michaud defends himself of being a mere conventionalist, but for the sake of what he calls a "relativism under strict restrictions", he declares an irreducible pluralism of artistic forms and limits any normativity to the inner boundaries of every community of evaluation and language game. However, I would not follow him if that meant declaring a complete incommensurability of aesthetic experiences, even restricted to the artistic domain.<sup>21</sup> It is true that we cannot reduce the pluralism of artistic practices; we cannot

<sup>15</sup> As a "conceptual connection" is how Tilghman (1984, pp. 204-205) – following Wittgenstein again– describes the relation between our emotions and the objects in the aesthetic experience.

<sup>16</sup> And that is why the empiricists postulated the existence of an internal sense, that becomes in Kant a *sensus communis*.

<sup>17</sup> Even by realists, see, for example, Zemach (1997), Levinson (2001), p. 62.

<sup>18</sup> "...for example, only if a person is acquainted with, say, period styles in art is it intelligible to say that he sees this painting as closer to mannerist tradition than to the baroque" (Tilghman, 2004, p. 255).

<sup>19</sup> Here, Michaud follows Wollheim (1968).

<sup>20</sup> It was the fact of existing standards of taste, demanding an explanation, what made Hume step away from his former scepticism (Hume, *The Sceptic*, 1742).

<sup>21</sup> I am not sure if Michaud's view has those implications. I cannot pursue here how Goldman's view of aesthetic experience as engagement of our mental capacities could work as criteria for evaluation that restricts Michaud's relativism ever further. I consider this a subject for future work.

close the list of artistic qualities and make impositions on the conditions of the production and on our aesthetic reactions. However, if I have succeeded in showing what aesthetic experience is and why it is worthy, it could be seen why it should be counted as criteria for the value of art, inside its own area and in comparison with other domains in which we could obtain aesthetic experiences. Art works are not the only objects of those we could experience aesthetically, but they, particularly the great ones, are objects that engage simultaneously our perceptual and emotional capacities as well as our intellects, challenging them in a way that other objects and practices don't. Great art works in the past have made us fully engross and exercise our perception, thought, imagination and feeling; even if it does not exhaust their value, we have obtained benefits in terms of enjoyment and enlightenment by experiencing them aesthetically. We would be right to expect the same benefits from present and future art.

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## SENSE AND CONCEPT: AESTHETIC THEORY BETWEEN ADORNO AND DELEUZE

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My point of departure for thinking about the relationship between sense and concept in aesthetic theory is a question raised by Adorno in the "Draft Introduction" to his *Aesthetic Theory* (1970). There, Adorno asks about the possibility of constructing a theory of aesthetics when the task of any "theory" would lead it to sacrifice the very things that seem to matter most about art. Criticism can attend to the sensuous detail and concrete particularity of *this* particular work, and can respect its stubborn refusal to be subsumed under conceptual generalities. Art's resistance to a full and complete rendering in a language built around abstract concepts is something that interpretive practice can likewise honor, and does, in the attention that criticism devotes to detail. Consider the adherence to "close reading" in the field of literary criticism, which I regard not as a fetishizing of "the text" but as a reluctance to forego one of the crucial things that distinguishes a work of literature from its paraphrase. Artworks speak as particulars. They address themselves to the senses. They are the bearers of meaning but, as Hegel reminded us, they are the *sensuous* manifestation of the truth.<sup>1</sup> The difficulty with aesthetic theory is that it seeks to measure the truth of art by means of conventional concepts, which are *dis*-embodied, schematic, and abstract. Little surprise, then, that aesthetic theory has so often seemed to miss the very thing that it hopes to explain. Indeed, it could well seem that when art is asked to submit its truth-content to the demands of a discourse built around abstract concepts the results will inevitably resemble what Walter Benjamin described as "the burning up of the husk as it enters the realm of ideas."<sup>2</sup> Benjamin's remark points to a cluster of fears: first, that aesthetic theory is the necrology of art—that in discounting art's material substance and sensuous grain, aesthetic theory may leave us with little more than a death-mask of the works in question; and second, that the transposition of art into the realm of theory may blind us to the ways in which artworks themselves make truth-claims, albeit claims that are ill-suited to a discourse that limits itself to concepts as they are conventionally understood. My argument is that art can model some of the possibilities for what *concrete* cognition might be, and likewise that art can articulate a critique of the ways in which the conventional notion of a "concept," hence of what counts as "rationality," has largely

been split off from the world of sense.<sup>3</sup> But I would also say that the artworks that best accomplish these things tend to recognize that the desire to find a plenitude of meaning in the world of sense is but a dream, a *promesse de bonheur*, that is bound to remain unfulfilled. Art in the age of aesthetics—which is also to say, in the age of modernism—is just as aware of the illusion contained in the notion of an "immediacy of sense" as it is critical of the abstractions of pure concepts. Insofar as aesthetic theory hopes to be responsible to art, it requires a refusal of abstract concepts along with a rejection of the false ideal of an immediacy of sense. Its task involves a validation of what we might best call the "concrete concept."<sup>4</sup>

My hope in this essay is to trace out some of the pathways that can lead toward this goal. But I should first acknowledge that *any* encounter with art, theoretical or otherwise, is bound to require some involvement with concepts in their more or less orthodox forms: as sources of *knowledge*, or expressions of *opinions*, or as statements of *beliefs*. One can hardly attempt to exclude the *knowledge* that a particular painting by Caravaggio is of the head of the Medusa; or the *belief* that Kenneth Branagh, the director of a film based on Shakespeare's *Hamlet*, is also, as an actor in that same film, the prince of Denmark; or the *opinion* that in authoring *Don Quixote* Cervantes also created the first modern novel. But such things are a matter of our cognition of these works, rather than of what they cognize by virtue of their existence as works of art.<sup>5</sup> If I place "cognize" in scare-quotes here it is to underscore the fact that the kind of knowledge implicit in artworks can hardly be formulated in the way that concepts as philosophy conventionally regards them apply to objects or states of affairs in the world. Indeed, part of what aesthetic theory has been unable to explain is that artworks are artefacts whose truth-content is "of" the world rather than "about" it.<sup>6</sup>

Recognizing that artworks are at bottom artefacts, Adorno located one of the great paradoxes of aesthetic theory in the fact that art offers us something that is at once *made* and *true*. "The metaphysics of art," he writes, "revolves around the question of how something spiritual that is made, in philosophical terms something 'merely posited' can be true" (*AT*, p. 131).<sup>7</sup> Adorno's response to this puzzle revolves around the conviction that what is made in art has the form of semblance;

semblance in art is akin to positing in a material form. What must be claimed, validated, and redeemed by aesthetic theory is precisely the truth of semblance.<sup>8</sup> The claim of art is that a given *image*--and I would include tactile and sound images as well as visual images here--can say or show something *true*. To cite Adorno again, "the question of the truth of something made is indeed none other than the question of semblance and the rescue of semblance as the semblance of the true... Of all the paradoxes of art, no doubt the innermost one is that only through making, through the production of particular works specifically and completely formed in themselves, and never through any immediate vision, does art achieve what is not made, the truth" (AT, p. 131).<sup>9</sup>

If works of art challenge conventional aesthetic theories, then, it is because they confound the paradigm of concept-grounded knowledge by virtue of their sensuous character. And if they challenge conventional philosophy it is because they locate truth and rationality in the materially conditioned world of artefactual production. In so doing, they stand to reveal the manner in which conventional models of cognition, which tend to focus on such things as sense-data and propositions, sacrifice the historical and material density of the world, not to mention the social relations that crisscross it, for the sake of a form of the concept that can only be schematic. In a crucial passage of the *Aesthetic Theory* Adorno argues that theoretical thought as a whole suffers from "an idealist prejudice insofar as it disposes solely over concepts" (AT, p. 258). It gives us a thinned-out, immaterial, schematized world, a death-mask of the world. Art, by contrast, draws upon what Adorno calls the "crude material" of the world, which it seeks to render eloquent and alive; in so doing it hopes to reverse the damage that theory has done to the material basis of life (see AT, p. 258). The task of aesthetics, following Adorno, would be to show how art establishes a materially-grounded mode of reason and, beyond that, to formulate the conditions of possibility for such a form of reason in this, the late- or post-modern age. This involves articulating the specific, historico-material logic associated with art; its charge is to free concepts from their externality to the objects in question and to locate them within the works themselves (AT, p. 181).<sup>10</sup> According to Adorno, art is a *grasping* of the truth, not a form of "endlessly talking about it, illustrating it, or somehow imitating it." "The truth-content of artworks is not what they mean but rather what decides whether the work in itself is true or false, and only this truth of the work in-itself is commensurable to philosophical interpretation and coincides.... with the idea of philosophical truth" (AT, pp. 130-131). This is fundamentally different from the way in which the philosophical tradition, and especially the tradition of epistemology, has conceived the truth.

**B**ut before continuing with Adorno and with his historicist perspective on this question, I want to explore a series of parallel issues that emerge in the work of Gilles Deleuze. Especially in those instances where Deleuze focuses explicitly on art--such as in his study of the works of Francis Bacon, and in the chapter on "Percept, Affect, Concept" in the book written with Felix Guattari, *What Is Philosophy?*, as well as in his study of Nietzsche and in his analysis of Leibnitz and the baroque, *The Fold*, he provides various ways of orienting the aesthetic field around the materialist cate-

gories of "force" and "sense." For Deleuze, art stands to play a crucial role in the effort to find ways out of the matrix of concepts, of representation, and of what he calls "figuration," because it produces a *logic of sensation*, and not merely a phenomenology of sense or of experience. The logic at work in art culminates in artefacts whose function is to preserve what Deleuze calls a "bloc of sensations," that is to say, "a compound of percepts and affects."<sup>11</sup> "Percepts" are perceptions objectified and made material; likewise, "affects" are independent of a phenomenology of experience in part because they have a material existence apart from those who experience them. "The aim of art is to wrest the percept from perceptions of objects and the states of a perceiving subject, to wrest the affect from affections" (*What Is Philosophy?*, p. 167).

The artist's task is not to create or to express, but to make the work *stand up on its own*. "Sometimes this requires what is, from the viewpoint of an implicit model, from the viewpoint of lived perceptions and affections, great geometrical improbability, physical imperfection, and organic abnormality. But these sublime errors accede to the necessity of art if they are internal means of standing up (or sitting or lying). 'Standing up' alone does not mean having a top and a bottom or being upright... it is only the act by which the compound of created sensations is preserved in itself--a monument, but one that may be contained in a few marks or a few lines, like a poem" (*What Is Philosophy?*, pp. 164-65).

I will return to the question of "standing up alone" in relation to the internal logic of artworks in my further comments on Adorno below. For now, I would simply note that Deleuze understands art not as the expression or imitation of anything, but as a form of *thinking the world*: art is a thinking of the world through sensations, which makes it different from, though not necessarily better than, philosophy or science. "Thinking is thought through concepts, or functions, or sensations and no one of these thoughts is better than any other, or more fully, completely, or synthetically 'thought'." "The three routes of thought," he writes, "are specific, each as direct as the others" (*What Is Philosophy?*, p.198).

And yet the Deleuzian notion of "sensation" is unable to generate an aesthetic *logic* without the complementary notion of force. Neither sensation nor sensibility is anything other than "a becoming of forces."<sup>12</sup> The notion of "force" is crucial because it can provide a way out of the impasse of empiricist and rationalist understandings of the problem of relations, which is in turn critical for understanding the fabric-like quality of the world. For empiricists of a Humean stripe, all relations between terms must be external to the terms themselves, and cannot be connected in any necessary way with them; the rationalist response to this view, which conceives relations as logically "internal" to the terms involved, hardly yields a more satisfactory view of the world. Deleuze gets beyond this impasse by conceiving "force" as a form of material relation; while he has sometimes been described as a "transcendental empiricist" he is equally a "material rationalist." Following Nietzsche, he views "force" as a form of material relationality; he locates "force" at the essence of things rather than *applied* to them from the outside. His claim is that in order to find the essence of something--whether a human, a biological or even a physical phenomenon--we must know the force [*puissance*] which "appropriates the thing, which exploits it, which takes possession of it or is expressed in it."<sup>13</sup>

The task of art in this regard--whether painting or music or sculpture or any other kind--is that of *capturing forces*, rather than of reproducing or inventing forms. Such is especially the case, Deleuze argues, in the paintings of Francis Bacon. "Bacon's Figures seem to be one of the most marvelous responses in the history of painting to the question, How can one make invisible forces visible?"<sup>14</sup> "The extraordinary agitation of Bacon's heads is not derived from a movement that the series would supposedly reconstitute, but rather from the forces of pressure, dilation, contraction, flattening, and elongation that are exerted on the immobile head.... The wiped and swept parts of the face here take on a new meaning, because they mark the zone where the force is in the process of striking. This is why the problems Bacon faces are indeed those of deformation and not transformation" (*Francis Bacon*, p. 50).

The achievement of an artist like Bacon is to allow the forces associated with sensations to produce de-formations, rather than to suggest trans-formations, as might have been the case with one of his most important predecessors, El Greco. But a materialist version of the Kantian question nonetheless remains: what, if anything, explains the synthetic unity of a sensation? This is hardly intuition or concept, but neither is it the "figured thing." Rather, Deleuze proposes that the unity of sensation is "rather like a snapshot of motion" of a multisensibile Figure [field], which "recomposes movement in all its continuity, speed, and violence, as in synthetic cubism, futurism, or Duchamp's *Nude*" (*Francis Bacon*, p. 35). This snapshot is one view of an "original unity of the senses," which the artist draws out into the visual field. But this is possible only if the sensation associated with one domain (here, the visual sensation) is in contact with what Deleuze describes as "a vital power that exceeds every domain and traverses them all. This power is Rhythm, which is more profound than vision, hearing, etc. Rhythm appears as music when it invests itself in the auditory level, and as painting when it invests the visual level.... Cézanne, it is said, is the painter who put a vital rhythm into the visual sensation.... Could it be that Bacon's closed and artificial world reveals the same vital movement as Cézanne's *Nature*?" (*Francis Bacon*, pp. 37-38).

These views can certainly explain how art--certain kinds of art, at least--upsets the role of the concept as the principal form of "truth" about the world. They can also help avoid a bluntly literalist, optical interpretation of art. And yet there is a huge risk involved in all this. Deleuze's affirmation of "life," which roots in a Nietzschean vitalism, leads in the direction of the undifferentiated ground of the "body without organs." "This ground, this rhythmic unity of the senses, can be discovered only by going beyond the organism.... Beyond the organism.... at the limit of the lived body, there lies what Artaud discovered and named: the body without organs.... The body without organs is opposed less to organs than to that organization of organs we call an organism" (*Nietzsche*, p. 39). But while Deleuze describes this as going *beyond* the organism, his rejection of the organized body is in fact regressive. It refers us back to some primordial place in the range of pre-linguistic and pre-subjective experience. It asks us to trade a historical materialism for a Nietzschean vitalism, a primalism of sorts, that regards history as a "variation of the senses," that is to say, as "the succession of more or less profound, more or less mutually

independent processes of subduing."<sup>15</sup> The historical meaning of force is power.

Adorno's *Aesthetic Theory* is, by contrast, committed to a late-Marxist, modernist, historical form of materialism that, not at all surprisingly, demonstrates significant affinities with aesthetic modernism. Published posthumously in 1970, the *Aesthetic Theory* was written toward the end of modernism's long historical course, some would say at a time when modernism had reached the limit of its potential validity as a source of truth. But Adorno could also recognize modernism as a moment when the continuation of art seemed to hinge on its powers of reflection on the conditions of its own possibility, both historical and material. Modernism was a moment when art began to (re)claim its own material conditions and to articulate its role in modeling the possibilities for what sensuous cognition might be. Its labor in re-discovering its own materiality was to carry forward the work of thinking, albeit by other than conceptual means. This implied coming to terms with the un-mastered residue of thought, allowing that residue to challenge what "thought" could mean, rather than appropriating it for whatever it already believed to be true. But, as modernist works also help make clear, art had itself often conspired in allowing thought to ignore the things that might resist it. Especially in its adherence to "figuration," art had habitually invited spectators to look "through" rather than "at" its materials in order to aim at the truth beyond them. Thus, modernism is fully aware of the fact that claiming art's power as a vehicle for the concrete concept also required a critique of much of the history of art since at least the time when the Albertian model of perspective drawing became dominant. On the positive side, the modernist critique was animated by the desire to reclaim the material motives that Western art has tended to exclude from the discourses of truth.

Among Adorno's recent expositors, Jay Bernstein has been among the most emphatic in linking Adorno's interest in modernism to the recovery of these "material motives." "*Traditional* works of art [my emphasis] are for the sake of ideas and ideals that were presumed to exist independently of the material formed. Modernist works, Adorno contends, enact a reversal in which form is for the same of what is formed; or better: the intelligibility of modernist works, the development of abstraction and negation, the role of dissonance in them, etc., all only makes sense if, apart from all intentions, modernism is dragged or pushed forward by a material motive that subverts all contesting ideal motives."<sup>16</sup> But, *pace* what Bernstein goes on to say, this material motive does not lead to the condition in which modernist works are identified with their materials--with "colors, paint-on-canvas, the rough brush stroke, the drip of paint" (*ibid.*). That would imply an untenable reductivism. To be sure, modernism corrects the habit of "looking through" the materiality of art by insisting that we also "look at" its materials, but it does so while also acknowledging the desire to "look through" or "in" those materials to some form of meaning or sense. Modernist works thus tend to hover in the movement that switches between "looking at" and "looking through," somewhat like the figure of the duck-rabbit that Wittgenstein borrowed from psychologist Joseph Jastrow.

In this "switching," modernist art emphasizes that paintings are made of paint and brush-strokes, that they are applied to a flat canvas, and also that the canvas has a surface, a texture,

and an edge; it sees that sculptures are indeed constructed, which is to say that its materials are fashioned, composed, joined, arranged. It also holds the promise of a meaning that is not reducible to those materials. It is in the end the site of an ongoing negotiation between these two modalities or interests, a place of critical dialogue, conflict, and active struggle. When compared with representational painting, for instance, the lines in Jackson Pollock occur within a space that has its own material coherence and establishes its own rules. (Cf. Adorno: "Each artwork is utopian insofar as through its form it anticipates what would finally be itself.... No artwork cedes to another," *AT*, p. 15). This, rather than any kind of *literal* concreteness or absolute materiality is what subtends the mysterious inner beauty and strangely compelling rationality of modernist works. Indeed, modernist art is characterized by the development of an internal logic that seems to be at once true and implausible or unfathomable.

To say that artworks of any sort have a logic at all means that they exhibit the force of a *claim* and that they display a set of internal relationships that appear as if necessary, in spite of the fact that they may not offer representations of anything in the world. As for the first of these points, art makes claims through its media and techniques, which may well include various forms of contextual reference.<sup>17</sup> Witness Duchamp's "Readymades" and their assertions about what it means to be a work of art in relation to a world of "mere real things." Indeed, every work has some assertive force (call it a rhetorical force) associated with it. (Cf. Wittgenstein's argument in the *Lectures and Conversations on Aesthetics, Psychology and Religious Belief*, that a large number of adjectives were first used as interjections, carrying with them a nearly gestural force: "Lovely!" "Fine!" "Beautiful!";<sup>18</sup> or in a more contemporary American idiom that has its own metaphorical basis, "Sweet!" or "Tight!") As for the second point, the internal logic of artworks, this is based on a desire to model states of affairs that display a form of necessity *without being reducible* to any kind of naturalism. To refer back to Deleuze, they are capable of "standing up on their own." The force of the "ought" that governs this aesthetic logic is on a par with the "ought" that applies in the world of practical or cognitive reasoning, *except* for the fact that it is embedded within a framework of contingent material relations that have no propositional content.<sup>19</sup>

In the work of Bernstein and, in turn, Robert Brandom, it has been proposed that the logic of art parallels that of *material inference structures*. Brandom gives the following examples. "Consider the inference from 'Pittsburgh is to the West of Philadelphia' to 'Philadelphia is to the East of Pittsburgh,' the inference from 'Today is Wednesday' to 'Tomorrow will be Thursday,' and from 'Lightning is seen now' to 'Thunder will be heard soon.' It is the contents of the concepts *West* and *East* that make the first a good inference, the contents of the concepts *Wednesday*, *Thursday*, *today* and *tomorrow* that make the second inference correct, and the contents of the concepts *lightning* and *thunder*, as well as the temporal concepts, that underwrite the third. Endorsing these inferences is part of grasping or mastering those concepts, quite apart from any specifically logical competence.... One could say that the set of possible worlds in which the premises of these inferences is true is a subset of the possible worlds in which their conclusions are true."<sup>20</sup>

The difference between these material inferences and the material inference structures at work in art lies in the fact that

in art there is no conceptual content, no "terms" to be defined. Artworks are *fundamentally material* and therefore *ultimately non-discursive*.<sup>21</sup> This means that art must establish logical relations out of *purely* material terms. In the case of a painting, this means that there is a logic of such things as adjacency, color, line, and shape, etc., all of which operate independently *and* in relation to one another in order to create a sense that a given work "could not have been otherwise."<sup>22</sup> The visual logic of painting, and especially of modernist painting, works to establish itself as coherent *and* as independent of any resemblance to the empirical world. There is, for example, a logic of color, hue, border, and blend that establishes the coherence of any given Mark Rothko "colorfield" painting, or of a Kandinsky abstraction even while recognizing the untranslatability of that logic. It is a logic of the type that says: *given this* in the way of color, shape, boundary, and form, *then this* follows from it.. In music, this happens by the creation of a syntax out of tonalities, sequences, and rhythms, all of which can be organized (or disrupted) to yield an overarching sense of necessity even while foregrounding the contingent relationship of these elements.. The appeal to "convention" as the source of the logic of art simply obscures these facts. To explain, for instance, that a tonal composition "resolves" in a particular way because of "convention" or because of certain "rules" of harmony, or to say that it refuses to do so for the sake of opposition to established conventions, is to cede the inherent logic of the work to the "institutions"—generic and conventional—in which the possibilities of its materials and their history have become embedded. Moreover, it is the business of modernism to disturb the force of conventions, aesthetic and otherwise.

Finally, it is *the materiality of the world*, and what has become of the materiality of the world in modernity, and not just the materiality of art and its media, that modernism urges upon us. And that materiality is lodged in the densely complex, deeply inhabited, and sometimes alienated forms of tradition, memory, labor, and practice. Modernism, in the end, is as much a discovery and revelation of the *distance* between these complex forms of life and their elemental, material substrata as it is a direct *recovery* of the material basis of life. For Adorno, aesthetic relations of production are always the "sedimentations or imprintings of social relations of production" (*AT*, p. 5). This means that modernist reflection on the material conditions of its own possibility is at the same time a reflection on what has become of the world under the conditions of production that hold sway in modern times. Modernist works reflect critically on the modern world by producing the semblance of something that does not in fact (yet) exist: a world of absolute sense. "Art desires what has not yet been, though everything that art is has already been. It cannot escape the shadow of the past. But what has not yet been is the concrete" (*AT*, p. 134). One way to read modernism's irrepressible self-consciousness would thus be as its recognition that a "utopian" leap into a realm where meaning can be discovered in pure materiality is impossible from the historical ground on which we stand. The only way possible is by means of semblance; semblance is necessary if art is to avoid a simple displacement of the abstract concept by a materialism that is incapable of thought; and it is in the end through semblance that, as Nietzsche suggested, the world is made more true.

## (ENDNOTES)

- <sup>1</sup> Hegel, *Lectures on Aesthetics* (henceforth *LA*), trans. T. M. Knox (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1975). Adorno explains how this is far more complex a matter than Hegel had imagined: "Artworks are enigmatic in that they are the physiognomy of an objective spirit that is never transparent to itself in the moment in which it appears" *Aesthetic Theory* (henceforth *AT*), trans. Robert Hullot-Kentor (Minneapolis: University Of Minnesota Press, 1997), p. 128.
- <sup>2</sup> Benjamin, *The Origin of German Tragic Drama*, trans. John Osborne (London: NLB, 1977), p. 31. Benjamin articulates the issue in language (the husk / the kernel) that echo medieval hermeneutics.
- <sup>3</sup> Cf. Eckbert Faas, *The Genealogy of Aesthetics* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002) on the overemphasis in aesthetics on spirit and the underemphasis of the body and sexuality.
- <sup>4</sup> Jay Bernstein's in-depth work on the "complex concept" comes closest to this idea. See *Adorno: Disenchantment and Ethics* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2001).
- <sup>5</sup> Adorno writes "art itself thinks" (*AT*, p. 99).
- <sup>6</sup> Christoph Menke writes of a related issue in his discussion of beauty in *The Sovereignty of Art: Aesthetic Negativity in Adorno and Derrida* (Cambridge: MIT Press, 1999). To the extent that art is "about" the world it solicits interpretive discourse (hermeneutics); to the extent that it is "of" the world it solicits an account of "aesthetic experience," which is he describes as nonconceptualizable (p. 110). Adorno writes: "A painter paints a picture rather than what it represents" (*AT*, p. 6). Equally, though, Menke's point is to underscore the configurative discontinuity, the linkage of insight and blindness, in the interpretive statements we make about art. This blindness is a blindness to the aesthetic strategies of the work in question. The matter roots in Hegel's *Aesthetics* and in the responses that Adorno and Derrida give to Hegel's idea that the beautiful in art is comprised, a "content" ("an aim, a meaning"), of "the expression, appearance, and realization of this content," and of the essential relation between the two (see Hegel, *LA*, I, p. 95).
- <sup>7</sup> See also *AT*, pp. 178-9. More than this, the artefact is an invitation to spirit: "spirit is that particular [thing] that makes an artefact art" (*AT*, p. 89).
- <sup>8</sup> Deleuze takes up this question in *The Logic of Sense*, ed. Constantin Boundas, trans. Mark Lester (New York: Columbia University Press, 1990), pp. 253-266. Cf. Deleuze's discussion of the simulacrum in relation to Lucretius and Epicurus (pp. 266-279).
- <sup>9</sup> On semblance in Adorno see Lambert Zuidervaart *Adorno's Aesthetic Theory: The Redemption of Illusion* (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 1993).
- <sup>10</sup> Indeed, an empiricist like Hume could only fathom "relations" as external to the terms involved. Such a view can best be understood in contrast to efforts by rationalist philosophers to resolve the paradox of relations—that either a means is found to make the relation internal to the terms, or a more profound and inclusive term is discovered to which the relation is already internal. I adopt this formulation from Deleuze's essay "Hume," in *Desert Islands and Other Texts, 1953-1974* (Los Angeles: Semiotext(e); and Cambridge, MA: distributed by MIT Press, 2004), p. 163. The challenge of aesthetic theory is to explain how art offers something other than the Humean-empiricist or the rationalist position.
- <sup>11</sup> Deleuze and Felix Guattari, *What Is Philosophy?* (henceforth *WIP*) (New York: Columbia University Press, 1994), p. 164. "Art preserves," he writes, "and it is the only thing in the world that is preserved. It preserves and is preserved in itself," even though it may last no longer than its material supports—stone, canvas, pigment, and so on" (p. 163).
- <sup>12</sup> Deleuze, *Nietzsche and Philosophy* (henceforth *N*) (New York: Columbia University Press, 1983), p. 63.
- <sup>13</sup> Deleuze, *N*, p. 3. Nietzsche identifies the principles of "force" as involving affirmation and negation, obedience and command: "Every force is related to others and it either obeys or commands. What defines a body is this relation between dominant and dominated forces. Every relationship of forces constitutes a body—whether it is chemical, biological, social or political. And any two forces, being unequal, constitute a body as soon as they enter into a relationship. This is why the body is always the fruit of chance" (*N*, p. 40). "The image that follows from these premises takes sense and value rather than the concept as fundamental" (*N*, p. 104).
- <sup>14</sup> Deleuze, *Francis Bacon: The Logic of Sensation*, trans. Daniel W. Smith (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2003), p. 49.
- <sup>15</sup> *N*, p. 3; Deleuze cites from the *Genealogy of Morals*, II, 12.
- <sup>16</sup> See Jay M. Bernstein, *Against Voluptuous Bodies* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2006).
- <sup>17</sup> There is a large literature on this subject, but see, in particular, Stanley Cavell's chapter on "Assertions in Techniques," in *The World Viewed* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1979).
- <sup>18</sup> Wittgenstein, *Lectures and Conversations on Aesthetics, Psychology and Religious Belief*, ed. Cyril Barrett (Berkeley: University of California Press, n.d.), p. 3.
- <sup>19</sup> I would add, however, that the internal "necessity" of artworks is counterbalanced by the opposing fact, namely that any given work might have been any way, and is not in itself necessary at all. (A work is, after all, akin to a claim, and claims, while potentially true, need not necessarily be made.) Especially in modernism, it is the paradoxical binding of necessity and contingency that gives art its power to speak the truth without being bound to the empirical world. Contingency is in turn heir of what Benjamin termed aura: "Aura is not only ... the here and now of the artwork, it is whatever goes beyond its factual givenness, its content" (*AT*, p. 45). At its extreme, this means that art can no longer be presupposed. As Adorno says at the very beginning of the *Aesthetic Theory*, "nothing concerning art is self-evident anymore, not its inner life, not its relation to the world, not even its right to exist" (*AT*, p. 1).
- <sup>20</sup> Brandom, *Making it Explicit: Reasoning, Representing, and Discursive Commitment* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1994), pp. 97-98. Note that neither the premises nor the conclusions of these inferences employ logical concepts; this is what sets them apart from inferences whose correctness depends strictly on logical form.
- <sup>21</sup> As Adorno says, "although artworks are neither conceptual nor judgmental, they are logical. In them nothing would be enigmatic if their immanent logicity did not accommodate discursive thought, whose criteria they nonetheless regularly disappoint. They most resemble the form of a syllogism and its prototype in empirical thought" (*AT*, p. 136).
- <sup>22</sup> Cf. Adorno: "Fantastic art in romanticism, as well as its traces in mannerism and the baroque, presents something nonexistent as existing. The fictions are modifications of empirical reality. The effect they produce is the presentation of the nonempirical as if it were empirical" (*AT*, p. 19).

# KITSCH AND ILLUSION

## THEME-HOTELS FROM MEDITERRANEAN COASTS OF TURKEY

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In *The Unbearable Lightness of Being* Kundera claims that to reveal the true nature of kitsch we need to ask questions, because “a question is like a knife that slices through the stage backdrop and gives us a look at what lies hidden behind it.”<sup>1</sup> This paper aims at bending the exclamation mark after “kitsch!” which we use to humiliate things that are most likely not appreciated by us and making it a question mark like “kitsch?” in order for an attempt to understand what it really is.

If we are to define what kitsch is, it can be said that kitsch is a modern term following the process of modernization. Nowadays, it has mostly been used for defining the taste of bad or popular art. However, it is something more than being popular and different than being bad. Unless we consider its being pretentiousness and its tendency to counterfeit, we can not fully comprehend what kitsch is. The crucial feature of kitsch is that it disguises itself and lies about its identity. Kitsch functions like a fake-sign which flatters the kitsch-lover's pride and relieves him by offering him some sort of sweet illusions. In order to do that, let us talk about *Don Quixote* for a while.

### 1. The Adventures of Don Quixote

Don Quixote, as we all know, is a story of a thin and a less than affluent man around his 50s who decides to set off a journey for “redressing all manner of wrongs.” Being a passionate reader, Alonso Quijano becomes obsessed with books of chivalry which are very popular at his time. One day, he makes up his mind to leave his home and “turn knight-errant and travel through the world with a horse and in search of adventures.” Equipping himself with old, rusty armor and a cardboard hel-

met, he renames himself Don Quixote de La Mancha. As a final step in his transformation into a knight-errant, he picks a girl, whom he calls Dulcinea Del Toboso, as every knight-errant in the chivalry romances has a lady with whom he is in love. With the same reason, as every knight-errant in the romances has a squire, Don Quixote persuades Sancho Panza, a fatty local worker, to be his squire by promising him an island to govern at the end.

The novel gets funny as our protagonist distorts every thing he sees. He muddles up windmills to be giants, flocks of sheep to be armies etc. Other characters in the book, accompany him and sometimes collaborate with him (some for fun, some for pity) even though they do not share his false perception. The story goes from one failure to another until we find him returned to his home, humiliated and on his death-bed, overcoming his illusions. He dies, perhaps disappointing most of his readers, acknowledging who he actually is and who he is not.

#### 1.1 THE PRINCIPLE OF QUID PRO QUO

The question is that, what makes Don Quixote confuse the things he sees? According to Girard, in the case of Don Quixote, the problem is *quid pro quo* meaning something for something else. Don Quixote confuses, for example, windmills with enemy giants as he misjudges them, because his “... sense of reality is lost and judgment is paralyzed.”<sup>2</sup> He fights against windmills as if they are giants. However, Sancho does not share his “paralyzed judgment” and evaluates windmills as windmills. The strange thing is that, although Sancho corrects him, he doubts not and keeps on believing what he used to believe in.

“Look, your worship,” said Sancho; “what we see there are not giants but windmills, and what seem to be their arms are the sails that turned by the wind make the millstone go.”

“It is easy to see,” replied Don Quixote, “that thou art not used to this business of adventures; those are giants; and if thou art afraid, away with thee out of this and betake thyself to prayer while I engage them in fierce and unequal combat.”<sup>3</sup>

Owing to “little sleep and too much reading,” Don Quixote starts to live mentally inside of chivalry romances. The more he



reads the less he lives his daily life in his village in La Mancha. At the end, his past world dissolves into the world of chivalric stories and the vocabulary he uses to define his life changes into one of chivalry. For instance, Don Quixote sees a man wearing what he imagines to be the famous helmet of Mambrino when it starts to rain a little. Mambrino is a fictional king, famous in the romances of chivalry, having a gold helmet which makes its owner untouchable and invulnerable. To have this gold helmet is the dream of all the great knights in the romances. However, the man Don Quixote sees is a barber and what he carries upon his head is a basin protecting the barber against the rain. But, "in Don Quixote's imagination the basin remains a helmet" as Cervantes says.

The contrast between his past vocabulary and his new vocabulary (including a king called Mambrino, a magical gold helmet and all sorts of heroic acts) creates a misunderstanding which produces the element of comedy. For Rorty, human beings have a "final vocabulary" which is "a set of words which they employ to justify their actions, their beliefs, their lives... They are the words in which we tell, sometimes prospectively sometimes respectively, the story of our lives."<sup>4</sup> This vocabulary is final in the sense that it designates the limits of man's thoughts and perceptions of life. On that account, the shift in the set of words is the shift of realities. Don Quixote's being *inside* of chivalry romances seems to blind him to the common vocabulary which he used to share with others before. Consequently, it can be said that the romances are the source of Don Quixote's illusions and are his blind spot where his eye lacks understanding or its view is obstructed.

Let us jump to the world of kitsch again and give some examples from a touristic Mediterranean coastal city in which I was born, Antalya, promising to return to the issue of Don Quixote afterwards.

## 2. Tourism Architecture in Mediterranean Coasts After the 80s

Although, the emergence of the kitsch dates backs to the middle of 19<sup>th</sup> century, its widely acceptance and in a way, legitimization, owes too much to the conditions of postmodernity. After 1980, Turkish entrepreneurs unanimously agreed that mass tourism is a way of earning good money while saving effort. Due to this fact, year by year the most beautiful and the most fertile coasts of Turkey were filled with hotel chains and holiday resorts one of which, for example, has 95 tennis courts in it.

Besides, owing to an increase in the number of hotels and resorts due to the historical and natural beauties of the city and to the convenient economic services, Antalya became one of the most important tourism centers in Turkey. However, this situation has brought about competitions. Hotels mostly erected after 80s must be evaluated as they were built in an environment which is a stage for tough competitions. Therefore, this situation has leaded owners and the new entrepreneurs to create a "difference." This difference has been called "a regional architecture."

In order to produce this "regional touch" and attract either local or foreign tourists, some strange elements, aiming at producing some kind of exotic and oriental effect and claiming to be peculiar to Mediterranean, started to appear. (Image 01) However, these exotic-oriental details are rather decorative than regional. The relationship between Mediterranean and a giant, British style porcelain tea pot seems quite questionable, though.<sup>5</sup>

(Image 02) Therefore, the Mediterranean coasts started to be a setting for a certain kind of kitschy architectural types whose reality is weak but the illusionary aspect is pretty strong.

### 2.1 THEME-HOTELS

Within 2000s, a much stronger ring has been added to the attempts of differentiation and appeal chain: The Theme-Hotels. Again linked to the raise of competition all along the 90s, entrepreneurs and architects looked for more attractive styles and finally, found a solution as importing the theme-hotel issue from America<sup>6</sup>. Just after the construction of *Hotel Topkapı Palace* (Image 03) in 1999, other "World of Wonders" started to invite us for "a holiday in a magnificent palatial architecture that we have never experienced," especially if we "look for a different, romantic and unusual holiday to enjoy very special and unforgettable moments."<sup>7</sup> Before *Hotel Topkapı Palace*, there were only decorative, kitschy details. However, with the emergence of it, touristic architecture changed its face dramatically. They exceed the preceding ones in the sense that they are totally kitsch.

In 2003, we have seen *Hotel Kremlin Palace* (Image 04) imitating the Grand Kremlin Palace, *Titanic Hotel* (Image 05) in the shape of a ship, *The Orange Country Hotel* (Image 06) imitating a street in Amsterdam and *The Concorde Hotel* (Image 07) in the shape of a plane said to be constructed for the honor of the disappearance of Concorde planes. These hotels are appreciated for combining modernity and nostalgia and are taken as a hope for a good season. The architecture of the first theme-hotel says that "Theme-hotels are very important tools for selling. They can be distinguished from other hotels in a very short time. They can easily be engraved in memories. Due to their appearance and comfort, they will always attract a higher number of people."<sup>8</sup> If the eventual aim is selling, attaining the greatest possible number of consumers and to be distinguished and remembered, perhaps no other tool can work better than kitsch. As for Kulka "the purpose of kitsch is to please the greatest possible number of people (as) it always plays on the most denominators" and "in order for the spectator to respond appropriately to the represented subject matter, he must be able to recognize it. ... What characterizes kitsch is the instant and effortless identifiability of the subject matter."<sup>9</sup>

## 3. Kitsch and Illusion

Now, let us return back to the story of Don Quixote and repeat the same question for *Hotel Kremlin Palace*. What makes the lover of kitsch confuse *Hotel Kremlin Place* with the original Grand Kremlin Palace?

In his famous trip to America in the 1830s, Tocqueville notes that when he first arrives in New York, he sees "a number of little palaces of white marble, several of which were of classic architecture" at some distance. He decides to go and see them more closely as he is attracted by them. After getting closer, he realizes with disappointment that these palaces' "walls are of whitewashed brick, and their columns are painted wood." For Tocqueville, in modern democracies there is always "a multitude of persons whose wants are above their means" and "whose fortune is on the increase, but whose desires grow much faster than their fortunes." These people are looking for "short cuts", and are "very willing to take up with imperfect satisfaction rather than abandon the object of their desires altogether."<sup>10</sup> This analysis gives us an insight for one of the functions of kitsch which is dis-



play and Baudrillard's "magical affiliation to the upper-classes,"<sup>11</sup> that is to say, status seeking.

However, for Calinescu, kitsch-lovers "... pleasure does not stop there. What constitutes the essence of kitsch is its open-ended indeterminacy, its vague "hallucinatory" power, its spurious dreaminess, its promise of easy "catharsis."<sup>12</sup> Therefore, kitsch is a response to the desire to escape from everyday life. It is tool for relaxation and forgetting. Yet, this forgetting is an inevitable source for a saccharine-type remembering. It banishes the unpleasant elements of the past and renders it as a positive tool of sweet illusions in the form of nostalgia. Therefore, what you have is a domesticated past which is purged of all the possible dangers of pain and whose relationship with history has been castrated. For Adorno, "the positive element of kitsch lies in the fact that it sets free for a moment the glimmering realization that you have wasted your life."<sup>13</sup> As a result, the second function of kitsch is satisfying the need to run away from the *unbearable*. That is why, it has to deceive.

"The positive element of kitsch" is equal to "the absolute denial of shit"<sup>14</sup> in Kundera's terms and also to Mambrino's magical, golden helmet. The eyes of Don Quixote, like the eyes of kitsch, are blind to objects which are not *glorious*. They can only pick up palatial beauties, renowned stories or heroic acts... For their eyes, there is nothing like an ordinary basin functioning just to protect from rain. This is one of the simplest forms of pride. Pride, no doubt, produces a possibility for both a sweet remembering of the past and endless illusions for the future whose falsity comes into the scene again and again, just like in the case of Don Quixote.

Don Quixote's pride never lets him to acknowledge his real situation. He is a 50 year-old ordinary man who (as he

"desires above his means") "has wasted his life." He desires to be a renowned chevalier, yet he thinks he is a chevalier. His pride is deaf to the words of the others. A peasant needlessly tries to persuade him. "Take heed, sir, that I am neither Don Rodrigo de Narvaez nor Marquis of Mantua. But Pedro Alonso your neighbour: and you are neither Baldwin nor Abindarraez, but the honorable gentleman Senior Quixano." (27) Don Quixote refuses the peasant's words as he answers "I know who I am."

The *paralyzed judgment and the loss of reality*, making Don Quixote misjudge the things he sees, are shared by the lovers of kitsch. For Broch, "... kitsch represents falsehood (it is often so defined, and rightly so), this falsehood falls back on the person in the need of it, on the person who uses this highly considerate mirror so as to be able to recognize himself in the counterfeit image it throws back of him and to confess his own lies."<sup>15</sup> Kitsch creates a "short cut" in the considerate mirror and makes the kitsch lover consider himself as if he is someone else. Therefore, the value of the self comes from the value of the desired self.

Now, let's remember the invitation of one of our theme-hotel palaces. "Staying in the comfortable rooms of 'Harem', having meals in the 'Kitchens of the Palace' or 'Hagia Irene', getting refreshed at the 'Fountain of Ahmet III' at the Sultan Ahmet Square, sipping your wine while enjoying the splendid view from 'Justice Tower', tasting the special milk pudding in the 'Mecidiye Pavilion' and more..."<sup>16</sup> they say. It is an offer to spend time without the worries of your 9 to 5 daily life and of who you actually are. If you have a little to give, you can buy these privileges for a week or two.

Kitsch is, not doubt, related with the "beauty" that has been put on sale. When you commercialize "beauty" on account of marketing laws and start to produce it in great numbers, you

are undoubtedly fabricating an ultimately suitable environment for misjudging. In such an environment, man is ready to confuse and misjudge the value of a matchless object "... whose original aesthetic meaning consisted, or should have consisted, again for Calinescu, in being unique and therefore inimitable."<sup>17</sup> Hotel Palaces owe their entire values to the value of the uniqueness of original Grand Kremlin or Topkapı Palaces.

## 4. Conclusion

Consequently, the different appearances of the same object prove that our belief in, in our case these hotel palaces, are questionable. The day when Don Quixote decides to "redress all manners of wrong," he already has a cliché in his mind originating from chivalry books. The adventurous spirit making Don Quixote act does not stem from an excitement for the new and unknown. He acts according to some ready formulas<sup>18</sup> which leave no space for experience. In other words, in his adventure, "all answers are given in advance and preclude any questions."<sup>19</sup> He ventures into the adventure to find a repetition of what he has found in the romances, therefore, his adventure "derive(s) from the basic images (he has) engraved in (his) memories."<sup>20</sup>

In *Thus Spoke Zarathustra*, Nietzsche talks about the convalescent, a person recovering from an illness. For him, the convalescent should sing and his singing would be different than both the healthy and the ill ones. He advises him to "go out to where the world awaits (us) like a garden."<sup>21</sup> The convalescent is a person who is aware of new possibilities, who passes beyond prescriptions, the clichés of his era. Then, Cervantes is a recovered Don Quixote, "... a Don Quixote who can see a barber's basin as a barber's basin but who nevertheless remembers that he once saw it as Mambrino's helmet."<sup>22</sup> Only this possibility makes Cervantes a great writer. If Cervantes would not be able to break free from his paralyzed judgment and become clear-sighted again, he probably will not be able to write the first modern novel which is born as opposed to romances. For Sontag, "*Don Quixote* is a book which is, first of all, an attack on a certain kind of literary kitsch."<sup>23</sup> Thanks to his illusions and then his recovery, Cervantes gave us the art of novel as a present. His singing is different than that of the ill Don Quixote who can only repeats the language of the romances. "Scarce had the rubicund Apollo spread over the face of the broad spacious earth the golden threads of his bright hair, scarce had the little birds of painted plumage attuned their notes to hail with dulcet and mellifluous harmony the coming of the rosy Dawn..." etc. Besides, his singing is also different than Sancho's. Cervantes is Nietzsche's convalescent. The grain of Don Quixote falls into the ground and dies, so it brings forth a fruit like the art of novel.<sup>24</sup>

Now, let us summarize what we have said about kitsch shortly. Kitsch is not only an object but also a certain kind of behavior of the subject who is ready to deceive himself. Our palace-like, ship-like or plane-like hotels can not be considered without the kitsch-lover. Therefore, to be against kitsch architecture does not sense have much meaning, unless we try to understand the gap in modern man. The reason why, we can more clearly understand the principles of modern life depends on a possibility immanent in kitsch. Kitsch behaves like a caricature as it exaggerates the features. It makes us see what we have failed to see before. Here, what we fail to see is a subject who tries to fulfill the gap inside of his soul with the crowd of objects as he attributes them some qualities which they do not possess.

Therefore, I think, before we humiliate and exclude kitsch as the other (with the exclamation mark after it), we need to consider the man's desires, hunger and dilemmas producing kitsch as Kundera says "everything has a right to be understood"<sup>25</sup> and this also includes kitsch.

## (REFERENCES AND NOTES)

- <sup>1</sup> Kundera, M., 1984. *The Unbearable Lightness of Being*, (trans. Michael Henry Heim), Faber and Faber Publications, London. p. 251.
- <sup>2</sup> Girard, R., 1976. *Deceit, Desire and the Novel*, (trans. Yvonne Freccero), The Johns Hopkins University Press, London. p.4
- <sup>3</sup> Cervantes, de M., *Don Quixote*, <http://www.gutenberg.org/files/996/996.txt>
- <sup>4</sup> Rorty, R., 1989. *Contingency, Irony and Solidarity*, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge. p.73
- <sup>5</sup> I actually had a holiday in this place when I was a child, and to see this giant tea pot was in a way, to be with Alice in the rabbit hole. Besides, Don Quixote, I think, Alice in Wonderland would also be a nice source for exploring kitsch in the sense that, Carroll has written the book for the "boredom" of real Alice in a boat trip.
- <sup>6</sup> The first theme-hotel, Walt Disney was built in 1950, Los Angeles.
- <sup>7</sup> [www.wowhotels.com](http://www.wowhotels.com)
- <sup>8</sup> Sökmen, H., 2005. *Antalya'da Uçak Şeklinde Otel*, <http://www.ntvmsnbc.com/news/317621.asp?om=n34g>
- <sup>9</sup> Kulk, T., 1996. *Kitsch and Art*, Penn State University Press, University Park, PA. p.28-29
- <sup>10</sup> Tocqueville, A., *Democracy in America*, [http://xroads.virginia.edu/~HYPER/DETOC/toc\\_idx.html](http://xroads.virginia.edu/~HYPER/DETOC/toc_idx.html)
- <sup>11</sup> Baudrillard, J., 1998. *The Consumer Society*, (trans. George Ritzer), Sage Publications, London. p.111
- <sup>12</sup> Calinescu, M., 1987. *Five Faces of Modernity: Modernism, Avant-Garde, Decadence, Kitsch, Post-Modernism*, Duke University Press, Durham. p.228
- <sup>13</sup> Adorno T. W., 2002. *Essays on Music*, Selected, with Introduction, Commentary and Notes by Richard Leppert (trans. Susan H. Gillespie), University of California Press. p.363
- <sup>14</sup> Kundera, M., 1984. *The Unbearable Lightness of Being*, (trans. Michael Henry Heim), Faber and Faber Publications, London. p. 246.
- <sup>15</sup> Broch, H., "Kitsch" (1933) and "Notes on the Problem of Kitsch" (1950). In *Kitsch: The World of Bad Taste*, edited by Gillo Dorfles. New York: Universe Books, 1968. p.49
- <sup>16</sup> [www.wowhotels.com](http://www.wowhotels.com)
- <sup>17</sup> Calinescu, M., 1987. *Five Faces of Modernity: Modernism, Avant-Garde, Decadence, Kitsch, Post-Modernism*, Duke University Press, Durham. p.226
- <sup>18</sup> "The chivalric romances have provided once and for all a written prescription for his adventures." (Foucault, 1994: 46)
- <sup>19</sup> Kundera, M., 1984. *The Unbearable Lightness of Being*, (trans. Michael Henry Heim), Faber and Faber Publications, London. p. 251
- <sup>20</sup> (Ibid. 248)
- <sup>21</sup> Nietzsche, W.F., 1961. *Thus Spoke Zarathustra*, (R.J. Hollingdale), Penguin Classics, London. p.236
- <sup>22</sup> Girard, R., 1976. *Deceit, Desire and the Novel*, (trans. Yvonne Freccero), The Johns Hopkins University Press, London. p.232
- <sup>23</sup> Sontag S., 1990. *On Kitsch*, Salmagundi: A Quarterly of the Humanities and Social Sciences, nos. 85-86 (Winter -Spring), p.249
- <sup>24</sup> "Except the grain of wheat falls into the ground and die, it abideth alone; but if it die, it bringeth forth much fruit" (Bible)
- <sup>25</sup> Kundera, in *The Art of the Novel* defines kitsch as a three-headed enemy of art as it claims to possess the truth. In contrast, "art that created to fascinating imaginative realm where no one owns the truth and everyone has the right to be understood."

# THE TRAGIC IN HEGEL AND NIETZSCHE

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## 1. Introduction

It seems that Hegel's and Nietzsche's philosophies do not have anything in common. Nietzsche is generally known as one of the severest opponents of rationalistic philosophy. On the contrary, Hegel consistently adheres to rationality. We can accordingly assume that concerning the tragic, they are also opposite to each other.

Hegel regards tragedy as a phase of the dialectic process through which *Spirit* [der Geist] gets through the finite and finally reaches the infinite. For him, the tragedy, of which the typical one is Greek tragedy, could be distinguished from the concept of the tragic [das Tragische]. The former could be counted as one of the spots where *Spirit* shows itself in the aesthetic way. On the other hand, the latter would imply the cognition of the rational nature embodied in tragedy. He exposes [darstellen] the intrinsic nature of tragedy from the entirely rationalistic point of view, to be exact, from the perspective of absolute *Spirit*.

Conversely, for Nietzsche, the tragic as the essence of tragedy could never be compatible with the so-called rationality. It would rather indicate a kind of breakdown of positive attitude towards rationality or towards rationalistic knowledge. Therefore, it would signify what the limit of rationality or rationalistic thought is and how it can be overcome. In this sense, it also implicates what the unexhausted fountain of life's vitality truly is. That is why he emphasizes on only Greek tragedy among lots of tragedies.

Thus, it is no wonder that someone insists on as follows: in regard to the tragic, Hegel and Nietzsche have nothing in common with each other. It does not definitely mean, of course, that they never converge in any way.

In this paper I would like to take a short general view of the basic difference between Hegel and Nietzsche in the matter of the tragic, and then to give an opinion on the inquiry into two contrary philosophical positions. The reason why I try to do this is that we could hereby be reminded of an attitude of life which would strongly be demanded and could be supported by many people these days. Namely, while inquiring into the two contrasting views about the tragic, in my opinion, we could again be aware of the fact that an antagonism might often be a false one and the most important is our actual life.

## 2. Hegel on the tragic

As is generally known, for Hegel, arts, namely fine arts [die schöne Künste] imply one of the self-expressions of *Spirit*.<sup>1</sup> The former are the outcomes of the latter that shows itself in the aesthetic way. First of all, thus, we need to try to understand Hegel's spirit exactly, in order to cognize the core of his opinion on arts and tragedy.

For Hegel, *Spirit* is not the word that we used to regard as the opposition to the body in everyday language. It does not denote an ability which makes us perceive, think, consider and judge, etc. It would rather be called the rationalistic principle of life through which we can understand not only the essence of things in general, but also of society and history in general. Hegel goes so far as to call it *Subject in itself*.<sup>2</sup> From this point of view, therefore, it could be said that the whole process of life is the self-development of *Spirit*. In other words, *Spirit*, being ceaselessly sublated [aufgehoben] in its own way, shows itself in our social and historical life.

Accordingly, Hegel's view about arts is quite different from Kant's. The arts he mentions presuppose a social nature. This means that an experience of arts can not be a subjective one rooted in any simple emotions or feelings at all. Such an experience always includes within itself an objective element.

Hegel considers poetic arts as the greatest among all the arts, because they express the most complete aesthetic phase of the self-movement of *Spirit*. And the highest among all the poetic arts is the drama [das Drama]. It is the most integral not only contently, but also formally. An action [eine Handlung] in the drama embodies the unity of epic objectivity and lyric subjectivity.<sup>3</sup> The action is taken from the subjective internality of the hero who always decides what to do and how to do independently and autonomously. At the same time, it always results from the objective nature of the state of affairs [die Sache selbst]. It

<sup>1</sup> Of course, according to Hegel, the fact that fine arts are nothing but the self-expressions of *Spirit* is not the premise of his philosophy of art, but the result of a phenomenological inquiry into spirit or consciousness. As everybody knows, the book in which such a result is written is *Phänomenologie des Geistes*.

<sup>2</sup> See, G. W. F. Hegel, *Phänomenologie des Geistes*, Hamburg, 1952, Vorrede.

<sup>3</sup> See, G. W. F. Hegel, *Vorlesungen über die Ästhetik*, in: *Werke in zwanzig Bände*, Frankfurt am Main, 1986, p. 474 ff.

thus keeps the unity of individuality and universality and accordingly the so-called concrete totality, even though it does in the aesthetic way. And the *pathos* of such an action nearly comes up to the stage of absolute *Spirit*. For this reason, the plot of the genuine drama must unfold on the basis of its internal necessity.<sup>4</sup>

Hegel insists that modern tragedy is the same as Greek tragedy in that it embodies the unity of individuality and universality. He even mentions that the one is superior to the other in some aspects. However, he regards the latter as the most typical tragedy and then, on the basis of it, explains the essence of tragedy.<sup>5</sup>

In the Greek tragedy, in which the ethical substance or the ethical actuality is expressed,<sup>6</sup> according to Hegel, the important is not chorus, but action. He consistently asks the ethical justification of tragic action.<sup>7</sup> Of course, such a justification must not already be determined or confirmed before the plot of the drama unfolds in its own way. Greek tragic dramatists treat this issue of tragedy distinguishedly. And any people can not but be impressed at their works, not only humanely but also artfully.<sup>8</sup>

In Greek tragedy, the action which a hero takes under his clear consciousness and the accident which is given prior to his will or his consciousness are treated as a contradictory relation and described so. Of course, such a relation eventually dissolves. Hero's actions are thereupon justified as the *pathos* based on ethicality [die Sittlichkeit].<sup>9</sup> In this way, the hero is explicated as a person who basically acts in accordance with his individual existence, but, at the same time, holds the idea of totality in his action.<sup>10</sup> His life or his action definitely expresses the concrete totality as aforesaid.

In Hegel's view on tragedy, however, what matters is that tragedy's distinctive position is to be sublated [aufgehoben] by the self-development of absolute *Spirit*. It does really matter. A tragic experience is nothing but a phase of the endless play in which absolute *Spirit* throws itself into a trial and then puts up with it, and finally results in a higher phase.

Consequently, we may well say that the tragedy Hegel observes is a kind of vehicle for the self-movement of absolute *Spirit*. It is no more than one of the productions of absolute *Spirit* in which the eternal or the absolute or the divine is shown to us in the aesthetic way.<sup>11</sup> The meaning of the tragic must also be subordinate to the absolute *Spirit*, therefore, as long as viewed in Hegel's insight.

### 3. Nietzsche on the tragic

The tragedy that Nietzsche concerns for is definitely Greek tragedy. He describes its core through two worlds, i.e., the Apollonian and the Dionysian. He likens Apollo to the world of dream and Dionysus to the world of ecstasy or intoxication. According to him, Greek tragedy could have been yielded out of a specific combination of these two elements.<sup>12</sup>

Apollo stands for the plastic art which is related with the imaginary beautiful world. By contrast, Dionysus stands for the music related with the origin world prior to and beyond all the imaginary appearances.<sup>13</sup> At the first glance, therefore, plastic art seems not to be related with the Dionysian. Since modern arts, says Nietzsche, it has in fact been developed only in such a way.

In the first ancient Greece, however, the development of plastic art did not diverge from the Dionysian power and vitality.<sup>14</sup> At that time, the Greek people were well aware that the plastic is originally stemmed from the Dionysian. They thought that Apollo inevitably collapses in case he is not with Dionysus. They early realized this fact and produced their artworks accordingly. This reveals their life's greatness. Greek tragedy came into being only from this spirit of theirs.<sup>15</sup>

Nonetheless, this spirit primordially signifies the spirit of music. Of course, as mentioned above, it does not mean that in Greek tragedy, the Apolline is entirely driven out and accordingly the Dionysian alone exists. Greek tragedy presupposes these two elements at the same time. The important is that only through the Dionysian, precisely speaking, through the Dionysian music, the tension between Apollo and Dionysus could truly be sustained and then the genuine aspect of life would also be manifested. Any art which tries to configure only the Apolline must be the same as the one that breaks away from original life, namely from the life in natural state [Naturzustand].<sup>16</sup>

In this context, it is to understand that "tragedy has been created out of tragic chorus and fundamentally it was only the chorus and nothing but the one."<sup>17</sup> Greek tragedy could take shape on the basis of the chorus. Without it, the tragedy must have been an art like a empty ear of wheat, or at most the one which sings only any desolation of life. It has been said that action is the kernel of Greek tragedy. This means that the essence of the tragedy consists in its ethical element.<sup>18</sup> However, according to Nietzsche, the heart of tragedy is chorus.<sup>19</sup> The ancient Greek people consider the chorus as the intrinsic nature of life.<sup>20</sup>

Dionysian music helps us stare at the origin of life. That is to say, the music tells us the limits of theoretical

<sup>4</sup> See, Ibid., p. 480. Of course, an author of the drama is demanded that he must have the ability to cognize the spiritual or the absolute. This implies, on the other hand, that it needs some degree of historical process for us to produce a great drama. See, Ibid., p. 481.

<sup>5</sup> See, Ibid., pp. 534ff.

<sup>6</sup> See, G. W. F. Hegel, *Phänomenologie des Geistes*, p. 314ff. That is why tragedy can not merely be considered as a literary work. For Hegel, an experience of tragedy should be understood from the ethical [sittlich] point of view. He points out this fact not only in the *Phänomenologie des Geistes*, but also in his early works. See, G. W. F. Hegel, *Werke Bd. 2, Jena Schriften*, Frankfurt am Main, 1986, p. 495.

<sup>7</sup> Hegel emphasizes on *Antigone* rather than *Oedipus*. This means that the former describes its ethical meanings in a more excellent way. See, G. W. F. Hegel, *Vorlesungen über die Ästhetik*, p. 550.

<sup>8</sup> See, Ibid., pp. 544-545.

<sup>9</sup> See, Ibid., pp. 545-546.

<sup>10</sup> See, Ibid., pp. 549-550.

<sup>11</sup> See, Ibid., pp. 572-574.

<sup>12</sup> See, F. Nietzsche, *Die Geburt der Tragödie*, in: *Nietzsche Werke*, hrsg. von Giorgio Colli und Mazzino Montinari, Berlin, Walter de Gruyter, 1972, p. 22, p. 78.

<sup>13</sup> See, Ibid., p. 47.

<sup>14</sup> See, Ibid., p. 78.

<sup>15</sup> See, Ibid., p. 36ff.

<sup>16</sup> See, Ibid., p. 51.

<sup>17</sup> See, Ibid., p. 36ff.

<sup>18</sup> As stated above, it is Hegel who takes a view of Greek tragedy in this way.

<sup>19</sup> See, Ibid., p. 58.

<sup>20</sup> See, Ibid., p. 51.

knowledge and further how to get over tragic sufferings or situations, and still more helps us realize what the true life is.<sup>21</sup> The tragedy opens our eyes to the true knowledge of life that is neither only for theory, nor ruled by a certain regular norm.

Greek tragedy says that even the most theoretical man never avoids a tragic situation, that through his tragic circumstance, he eventually gets a kind of magic power (Dionysian laugh or cheeriness)<sup>22</sup> and herewith takes a cheerful view of life.<sup>23</sup> In this way, Greek tragedy tells us the tragic insight to life.

Here the first and most important is that the element which makes us tide over tragic situation emerges from Dithyrambic music, namely Dionysian chorus. This chorus makes it possible that we can get out of the fear of tragic situation and ride out such a situation.<sup>24</sup> The so-called cheeriness of Greek tragedy springs from the power of this chorus. In this sense, the chorus of Greek tragedy, so to speak, the satyrmusic is differentiated from other choruses.<sup>25</sup> Although Greek tragedy was born from the duplexity of the Apolline and the Dionysian, thus, it is at bottom based on the latter, and therefore it could be a hollow one in case the latter is rejected or eliminated.

In the history of Greek tragedy, by the way, the Dionysian has been neglected since Euripides. He emphasizes on the so-called Socratic. He tries to ground the tragedy only on the Apolline and hence to make it a theory. He is not so much a poet as a thinker. He says, "everything is to understand in order to be beautiful." It exactly corresponds to Socrates' principle as follows: "everything must theoretically be known in order to be virtuous."<sup>26</sup>

Euripides is really an antagonist of Greek tragedy, even if he intends to produce a newly revised tragedy. The Socratic principle he supports is opposite to the chorus of Greek tragedy. The tragedy that lies in Socratic optimism leads to its death.<sup>27</sup> Socraticism destroys the essence of tragedy by means of its syllogism. It reduces the Dionysian element of life to the logical and accordingly turns the tragedy into a supplement of science [Wissenschaft]. Tragic cognition takes place where theoretical knowledge comes to its limits and then tragic situation is close at hand. In Socraticism, however, the state of affairs is exactly converse and tragic cognition is fully covered by theoretical one.

The spirit of music sets people free from the situation of isolated individual, for instance, from the situation of modern individual under the compulsion of universality or theory.<sup>28</sup> Dionysian music is the idea of eternal life in itself. Greek tragedy is the great treasure in which a figurative language embodies Dionysian wisdom.<sup>29</sup> People who always

live in this wisdom are the ones like children, and the ancient Greek people are such ones.<sup>30</sup>

Hence, the tragic view of the world that Greek tragedy suggests must be in a struggle relation with the theoretical one that had been based by Socrates and has been further developed since modern society. This means that the tragedy could rebirth someplace where theoretical knowledge or the spirit of science discloses its limits<sup>31</sup> and on the other hand it would disappear someplace where the spirit of Dionysian music is excluded.<sup>32</sup>

In sum, for Nietzsche, the most important regarding the tragic is not theoretical or scientific knowledge, but the Dionysian view of the world, through which we can look out over the total world truly and overpass tragic situations and eventually greet our life with cheeriness.

## 4. Few remarks

Hegel's exposition [Darstellung] of tragedy thoroughly rests on a rationalistic point of view which is owing to a kind of teleological insight into the whole human history. He thinks that the whole of human being's life can absolutely be comprehended and accordingly explained from the rationalistic point of view. For this reason, he all the time criticizes the positions according to which there is something that could never be replaced by rationality. In regard of tragedy as well as fine arts in general, his opinion is authenticated in such a rationalistic philosophy.

As stated above, says Hegel, fine arts are the places where absolute *Spirit* displays itself in the aesthetic way. Tragedy is one of the fine arts, which should be sublated into the further complete rationality and finally transferred to the absolute *Spirit* as the highest of rationality. In respect to tragedy, after all, the most important is that *Spirit* should get over its limits, namely its aesthetic phase and then proceed to the absolute. In this regard, we could say that the tragedy only has the meaning of which the boundary is completely defined by absolute *Spirit*, for all that it could newly be interpreted in our contemporary aesthetics.

On the contrary, Nietzsche continuously points out that the origin of our life is rather based on irrational element than rational one. Here, of course, the irrational does not simply signify the opposite to the rational. It could rather be called an element that transcends the superficial contradiction of the rational and the irrational. It is the very meaning of the tragic and the aesthetic in Nietzsche.

Accordingly, for Nietzsche, the tragic could never be determined and explained as the rationalistic or the irrational in the general sense. It rather stands for the original force of nature. It symbolizes the true element of life that is previous to the evident divergence between the rational and the irrational. It refers to the limits of rationalistic attitude in life. Namely, even those who thoroughly follow after the so-called rationalistic position cannot but have their limit and consequently confront with a certain insuperable problem.

<sup>21</sup> See, *Ibid.*, p. 52.

<sup>22</sup> See, *Ibid.*, p. 68.

<sup>23</sup> For instance, we could say as follow: Oedipus had at first been placed in a desperate situation, and then took a kind of magic power through the sufferings, and eventually greeted his life with cheerfulness.

<sup>24</sup> See, *Ibid.*, p. 53.

<sup>25</sup> See, *Ibid.*, p. 53. In this regard, the important thing is that Dithyrambic chorus makes us forget something, for example, our past, our social situation, etc. Herewith, we all become a unit.

<sup>26</sup> See, *Ibid.*, p. 81.

<sup>27</sup> See, *Ibid.*, p. 90.

<sup>28</sup> See, *Ibid.*, p. 104.

<sup>29</sup> See, *Ibid.*, p. 105.

<sup>30</sup> See, *Ibid.*, p. 106.

<sup>31</sup> See, *Ibid.*, p. 107.

<sup>32</sup> See, *Ibid.*, p. 110.

And further it alludes how men can genuinely overcome such a situation or circumstance.

The tragic is prior to all of the stereotyped artworks or arts. On this account, Nietzsche's art has rarely anything in common with the traditional art rooted on the representation of existing state, for instance, with the painting based on the principle of perspective drawing. According to Nietzsche, the traditional art emphasizes one side of life and further turns it into the whole of life. Therefore, such an art eventually distorts and destroys the essence of life, and gets away from the genuine artistic and aesthetic.

Such being the case, it seems to be quite natural that someone only insists on an opposition between Hegel and Nietzsche regarding the tragic. The only thing we should obviously recognize seems that we need not be impetuous to look after their common points and to rush to a conclusion.

Nonetheless, there are at least the two questions we needs must do. Firstly, can we say that the essence of tragedy could thoroughly be cognized in the name of rationality? Secondly, must we give up any attempt to catch hold of the essence of tragedy rationally, just because tragedy says that there is something not to be solved through rationality, i.e., that there is something beyond rationality?

Rarely could we get an affirmative answer to these questions. In this regard, we could say that regarding the tragic, the contradiction of Hegel and Nietzsche might be a false one. Their thoughts of the tragic might supplement each other, unlike their superficial opposition.

Hegel and Nietzsche, both of them have in view a depth element of life underlying the superficial, which means that their points of view regarding the tragic are based on a profound dimension. Therefore, even if their basic directions upon which they treat the tragic seem to be quite different, it may safely be said that their remarks might complement each other in the depths of rationality or irrationality.<sup>33</sup>

While trying to study Hegel's and Nietzsche's views on the tragic and then to interpret them newly, anyway, we must not be far from our actual [wirklich] life. And much less must we be indulged into treating such an inquiry in the abstract. Without mentioning Nietzsche, Hegel also thinks much of this point. Contrary to the superficial glance, Hegel's spirit or rationality is never far from our actual life. If someone insists that Hegel's spirit is definitely far from it, Hegel will never agree with him. The *Spirit* which is irrelevant to our actual life, says Hegel, is not the authentic, but the abstract one.<sup>34</sup>

Therefore, we can safely assume that with regard to the tragic in Hegel and Nietzsche, any new interpretation unavoidably falls in an abstract and prosaic one in case it is far from our actual life in itself. This is what we should deeply impress upon our mind when we try to inquire into a common feature in Hegel's and Nietzsche's theories of the tragic and then to interpret it newly, I think, whether we successfully do it or not.

<sup>33</sup> We could take out a clue of such a possibility from the fact that Nietzsche affirms the truthful knowledge despite he denies truth or knowledge in general. See, *Ibid.*, p.53.

<sup>34</sup> The *Spirit* which is far from the actuality of life and definitely opposed to it, according to Hegel, is called *self-alienated Spirit*. The faith which flees from the actuality and stands beyond it is an example of this *self-alienated Spirit*. See, G. W. F. Hegel, *Pänomenologie des Geistes*, p. 376ff.

## THE HIDDEN HISTORY OF IMAGINATION

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There is the well-known, history-of-philosophy and-dictionary approved, history of imagination.

The following pages are motivated by the fact that even the most pedestrian survey of the concept of imagination shows a certain fuzziness: "imagination" is quickly discarded if there is a better way to define a problem.<sup>1</sup> The concept is not quite as obsolete as the legendary *phlogiston*, a substance assumed to cause burning: imagination, the imaginary and related terms even have periods of intense revival.

It simply is not possible to deny the human activity of creating mental pictures of things not actually perceived, the activity of creating images of things never perceived, of things contradicting simple experience. The minimal definition of imagining as the activity of picturing something absent is simple enough; but the protean nature of the whole range of imagining activities introduces history. You can't define something historically mutable.

However there is a clear bifurcation. On one side there is imagination in epistemology, on the other side there is the realm of "as if", of the fictional.

Our story starts with Aristotle: "Imagination (*phantasia*) is the process by which we say that an image (*phantasma*) is presented to us" (*De Anima* 428a 1-4) "The soul never thinks without a mental image (*phantasma*)" (*De Anima* 431a 15-20).

Imagination mediates between perception and thought. From the very beginning there was a less than clear connection between the necessary work done in combining the contributions of the senses, the necessary work done in "calling to mind" absent things and images produced by desire. Imagination "from the beginning" is literally common sense but already showing elements later developed in numerous binary oppositions between imagination and real life, real knowledge etc. Descartes develops the elements of a dualist mind-body scheme where imagination keeps re-appearing in a minor key. Hume stresses the defects of

imagination and Kant's *Einbildungskraft* is both a force of order and ultimately impenetrable ...

The romantic period introduces the subversive use of imagination. Imagination developed in the "as if" world is used as a paradigm for change and revolution. The whole range, the differences between creating, inventing, discovering are differences in the use of imagination.

Sometimes as part of the Enlightenment project, sometimes against it.<sup>2</sup> We still have to puzzle out Adorno's sentence from *Negative Dialectics*:<sup>3</sup> "Utopia is blocked off by possibility, never by immediate reality." Imagining an utopian Other while seeing every detail of our material world, not just spinning out different versions.

We can't repeat all stages but start from a recent way of connecting epistemology and subversion.

I take a work of Arjun Appadurai and quote him on fantasy as social practice:

*"Until recently, whatever the force of social change, a case could be made that social life was largely inertial... and that fantasy and imagination were residual practices, confined to special moments or places. In general, imagination and fantasy were antidotes to the finitude of social experience ... As the deterritorialisation of persons, images and ideas has taken on a new force, this weight has imperceptibly shifted. More persons throughout the world see their lives through the prisms of possible lives offered by the mass media in all their forms. That is, fantasy is now a social practice; it enters, in a host of ways, into the fabrication of social lives for many people in many societies."*<sup>4</sup>

How new is this and how different from the stories of Don Quixote and Emma Bovary? The last decades have seen the flowering of research on

<sup>1</sup> The usual references in the philosophical literature are Jeanne Bernis, *L'Imagination*, Paris 1954; 1961 and Mary Warnock, *Imagination*, London 1976; slightly more enterprising: Dietmar Kamper, *Zur Geschichte der Einbildungskraft*, Rheinbeck-Hamburg 1990.

<sup>2</sup> Very much part of the dialectic of enlightenment is Adorno's concept of «exact imagination»; see Sherry Weber Nicholsen, *Exact Imagination, Late Work*, Cambridge Ma, 1997.

<sup>3</sup> A sentence recently used as a starting point in Alexander Garcia Duttman's new book on Visconti.

<sup>4</sup> Arjun Appadurai, *Modernity at Large*, Minneapolis 1996, pp.54, 55.



reading so that we now really know who read, where exactly, what kind of books etc. although the impact of this activity is still hard to measure. The glorious days of reading ended in the twenties or thirties of last century and since then we have another question, the question of changes caused by new media.

A contemporary way of studying the impact is the constant recourse to anthropology and evolutionary theory.

Again, an obvious quote, from an article by Steven Mithen, a rather long passage containing all assumptions:

"There are various types of human imagination whose origins lie at different places in our evolutionary history. Imagination in terms of thinking (perhaps unconsciously) about the consequences of different courses of action is likely to be very old indeed, as this is a type of imagination most likely shared by many animals. Imagination in terms of thinking about the contents of other minds probably stretches back to the common ancestor of 5-6 million years ago, and was an essential means of maintaining the complex and large social groups of Early Humans. This way of thinking played an essential role in human evolution, and remains critical to our everyday thought and behavior. We revel in it, and applaud those artists who place this type of imaginative thought at the centers of their work.

Imagination in terms of narrative would also have become important within the world of Early Humans, as transmission of tool-making skills, the planning of big game hunting, and communication about new places and landscapes were essential. In the absence of language, gesture and mime may have played a critical role. But it was because of – not in spite of – the absence of spoken language, that such selective pressures may have been placed on imaginative abilities. If another individual could have simply told what he/she had seen or what was being planned, the Early Human mind may not have required such powers of imagination.

Imagination in terms of creating worlds in which the rules of nature and society are broken – fantasy – is the most recent form of imagination to have evolved. Evolution had guarded against such ways of thinking that are potentially so maladaptive by creating minds with both ways of thinking and bodies of knowledge quite isolated from each other. Modern humans, especially those after 50.000 years ago, learned how to overcome those evolutionary constraints by exploiting material culture, by telling stories, and performing rituals as a means to offload and provide cognitive anchors for ideas that have no natural home within the evolved mind. In this regard, the modern brain is unlikely to be significantly different from that of a Neanderthal. But it is linked into the world of human culture that augments and extends its powers in remarkable ways. It is this linkage that leads to works of art and science, which then act as cognitive foundations for further works and so on through human history.<sup>5</sup>

Mithen's idea about a cumulative and on-going dialectic between brain and culture is only one of the proliferating ways of importing theory of evolution in cultural matters.

Somewhere, outside academic circles, cultural institutions and the world of sophistication in general, there still are people who assume that philosophers, should such a need arise; provide answers of a general nature to all kinds of questions without unduly consulting science.

Still, imagination is discussed in psychology and cognitive science and even if we consider philosophy to be an activity generating events and not as a discursive formation stringing together propositions susceptible of logical refutation,<sup>6</sup> something I do not subscribe, we all live in a world heavily determined by science. We may not be satisfied with a story of art based on artifacts as tools for developing cognitive fluidity and so evolutionary valuable but neither is our imaginary museum a collection of timeless achievements.

The increasing popularity of invoking anthropology in aesthetic matters has a respectable genealogy; again, only a short reminder of a not so hidden connection, the French ethnologist, anthropologist, pre-historian Andre Leroi-Gourhan who died in 1986. Leroi-Gourhan is an important point of reference in Derrida's *Grammatology*.

"L.-G. no longer describes the unity of man and the human adventure thus by the simple possibility of the graphie in general; rather as a stage or an articulation in the history of life – of what I have called *différance* – as the history of the *gramme*. Instead of having recourse to the concepts that habitually serve to distinguish man from other living beings (instinct and intelligence, absence or presence of speech, of society, of economy etc) the notion of *program* is invoked ... That is irreducible and impregnable. If the expression ventured by Leroi-Gourhan is accepted, one could speak of a 'liberation of memory', of an exteriorization always already begun but always larger than the trace which, beginning from the elementary programs of so-called 'instinctive' behavior up to the constitution of electronic card-indexes and reading machines and the possibility of putting in reserve: it at once and in the same movement constitutes and effaces so-called conscious subjectivity, its logos and its theological attributes."

Aesthetics deals with the specific functionality of non-functional, non-immediately useful artefacts and activities. Why are they 'good to think with'? The displacement in a different realm can give these artifacts and activities a pivotal role in the symbolic mediation of human existence. Displacement is seen both as transferring an activity into no-functional objects, or performances, spectacles and as the displacement as the foundation of any kind of human activity. The most usual form of displacement is doublement: re-production, the mimetic. What is the role of imagination?

There seem to be two schools of thought. One of them treats the human mind like a kind of Swiss (army) knife, a knife that sports multiple appliances, domain specific and diversified and the other schools only sees a general purpose learning mechanism. Both stress that prehistoric artifacts must have been "good for thinking", must have stored, transmitted and retrieved information.

From an other anthropologist, from Mary Douglas, comes the chilling question: what if art becomes impossible

<sup>5</sup> Steven Mithen, "The Evolution of Imagination; An Archaeological Perspective", *SubStance*, University of Wisconsin, 30,1&2 (2001), p. 51, 52.

<sup>6</sup> A good explanation of this position is Eric Alliez's "Questionnaire on Deleuze" in *Theory, Culture and Society*, Vol.14, No 2, May 1997.

the moment its function becomes too self-conscious (inspiration, genius, avant-garde and post-modernism being just strategies to go on producing unpredictable artifacts – *l'art pour l'art* position a highly successful strategy). Auto-telic self-sufficiency is part of the achievement, of the development in certain cultures but an endangered achievement.

Imagination is hidden behind the binary opposition of the mimetic and the expressive. It is hidden even in Benjamin's notion of the optical unconsciousness. Let us examine the well-known passage from the "Little History of Photography": "It is through photography that we first discover the existence of this optical unconscious ... meaningful yet covert enough to find a hiding place in waking dreams ... make the difference between technology and magic visible as a thoroughly historical variable."<sup>7</sup>

On the other hand, Barbara Maria Stafford argues "against the narrow tendency, evident in cognitive science and disciplines influenced by it, to equate consciousness solely with linguistic capabilities: "High order images, like cross-linking works of art, exhibit how our polarized perceptions of the world are processed as representations in various areas of the brain."<sup>8</sup> Networked spatial relations are crucial in the construction of self-awareness.

This new vocabularies introduce new ways of dealing with the amazing mediation between exterior and interior elements that constitutes experience.

Michael Taussig studies of the mimetic are already classic<sup>9</sup> and only slightly less known is Jay's constant development of Adorno's positions.<sup>10</sup>

Jay's summary of Adorno reads: **mimesis is problematic when it is in league with the instrumental rationality of the modern world.** It remains the basic mode, the core of displacement. We repeat and play at make-belief: summoning an absence into presence. Imagining.

Experience is a difficult concept and under heavy attack for most of the twentieth century but of course at least a necessary fiction. Because we no longer argue for immediacy, presence, evidence of the here and now, detours, mediations, displacements are the constitutive elements to define experience.

Allow me as well to find an appropriate point in Leroi-Gourhan. Writing about the "language of forms" in the counter point of prehistoric and contemporary art he argued that social memory exists, its reason for existence is larger but inclusive of aesthetics. He also argued that the loss of manual discovery, of the personal encounter between human and matter in the exercise of craft, has closed one of the doors to individual aesthetic innovation ...

Artistic popularization enables the human masses to live passively on the planet's cultural stock.

But how passive is the social practice of imagination? No one could deny the impact of *imagined* communities described by Benedict Anderson. The idea of constitutive imagination is beautifully developed in Paul Veyne's classic book *Les Grecs ont-ils cru à leurs mythes* but the short answer

(they did and they did not) is different I what Anderson call "print capitalism" and what Appadurai researches as "electronic capitalism". With satellite dishes on every roof in immigrant communities, emotional ties are kept up on a daily basis. Offense and outrage are easily communicated. Rushdie and Danish cartoons get to audiences they don't seek

Now, the Western world is supposedly dis-enchanted, ent-zaubert. The prevailing imagination is described as ironic.<sup>11</sup> "Westerners" are supposedly immersed in fictional worlds but never lost. But: our own experience and proper scientific research show as that "make-believe", "as if" games are mastered by human infants all over the world very early, before they walk and talk.<sup>12</sup> The constant re-negotiation of between the "real" and the "imaginary" goes on and on all over the world. Globalization is a factor because of constant interferences.

A brave new world, if we are lucky.

<sup>7</sup> Trans. in W.B. *Selected Writings* 2, Harvard University Press 1999, p. 512.

<sup>8</sup> Barbara Maria Stafford, "The Combinatorial Aesthetics of Neurobiology", in *Aesthetic Subjects*, ed. Matthews&McWhirter, Minneapolis 2003.

<sup>9</sup> Michael Taussig, *Mimesis and Alterity*, London 1991.

<sup>10</sup> Most recently in Martin Jay, *Songs of Experience*, Berkeley 2005.

<sup>11</sup> An entertaining view developed by Michael Saler, "Modernity, Disenchantment and the Ironic Imagination", *Philosophy&Literature* 28.1 (2004) Baltimore.

<sup>12</sup> A willingness to deal with evidence of all kinds is shown by the contributors of the volume *Imagination, Philosophy, and the Arts*, ed. Matthew Kieran&Dominic McIver Lopes, London 2003.

## LE PERFORMEUR DEVANT SA MORT (SI FUNESTES DÉSIRS...)

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### Avant-propos

Aujourd'hui, qui est la fête du drame hongrois<sup>1</sup>, je voudrais parler devant vous sur deux figures emblématiques du théâtre hongrois. J'ai l'intention de parler sur le théâtre réel (réalisé) de Péter Halász et sur le théâtre rêvé (imaginaire) d'András Jeleš.

### Quelqu'un du dehors : András Jeleš

Le théâtre d'András Jeleš n'est pas un théâtre d'un homme de théâtre. Jeleš veut faire du théâtre, mais il ne veut pas être un homme de théâtre. Comme ses grands précurseurs –Antonin Artaud, Piero Pasolini– il est contre les conventions. Ils sont tous arrivés du dehors. Ils protestent que la matière théâtrale soit l'œuvre écrite, le drame. Néanmoins, András Jeleš est un homme littéraire. Il a publié un scénario (*Joseph et ses frères*<sup>2</sup>), un drame (*Passion*<sup>3</sup>), un volume d'aphorismes (*Bataillon disciplinaire*<sup>4</sup>) et les essais (*Création, cauchemar*<sup>5</sup>). Et surtout, comme son ami et collègue András Forgách avoue : « Il travaille sur un roman de Jésus, depuis je le connais »<sup>6</sup>. On peut constater que dans son théâtre, comme dans sa personnalité, il y a quelque chose d'énigmatique. Son théâtre est une rareté, ses choix personnels sont toutes les fois les origines des événements dramatiques.

Je voudrais présenter son idée sur le théâtre en citant sa *Lettre à propos d'une « laboratoire théâtrale »*<sup>7</sup>, écrite en 1979, adressée aux jeunes cinéastes (aux membres de Studiós Béla Balázs). Il commence cette lettre-manifestation par déclarer qu'il existe une exigence passionnée entre eux pour faire un « vrai » théâtre. Le THÉÂTRE-projet, ce qu'il propose, ne peut pas être un guide pour le « vrai » théâtre, mais peut être considéré comme un chemin instructif (avec grand enseignement et résultat). Selon sa thèse, sur les planches actuelles, il y a un conflit, un combat entre le Drame et l'Acteur. Il n'y a plus de

place pour les recherches. Le mécanisme théâtral (ce qui fonctionne d'une certaine manière) ne peut pas mettre en question son fonctionnement. À l'avis de Jeleš, la parodie de la convention théâtrale pourrait être représenté par un spectacle dont les acteurs immobiles et muets resteraient sur les planches sans aucune expression, mais les spectateurs, au contraire, en riant ou sanglant, imiteraient les acteurs. En bref, dans ce cas, le spectateur pourrait jouer comment l'acteur s'identifie avec son rôle (et ce spectacle pourrait être une comédie de l'imitation).

Vers la fin de cette lettre-manifestation, A. Jeleš pose la question essentielle : « Comment continuer ? » Selon sa réponse, il faut « recommencer », pour qu'on puisse voir le vrai visage de notre époque au miroir du théâtre. LE LABORATOIRE THÉÂTRAL –contrairement toutes les méthodes– est en vérité une « expérience ». Tout au long de leur travail actuel, les artistes, les créateurs posent à nouveau leurs propres interrogations (comme les questions premièrement posées) : « Qu'est-ce que c'est le texte ? l'acteur ? la parole ? le public ? le décor ? » etc.. En écrivant cette lettre A. Jeleš a posé également ces questions fondamentales. Il a continué cette interrogation en pratique : pendant les années 80' et 90' il a travaillé beaucoup au domaine de théâtre (avec le group nommé „Monteverdi Cercle”).

### »Kleist est en train de mourir...«

Pour illustrer son travail, je voudrais présenter en quelques mots sa mis en scène de 1994, intitulé : *Kleist est en train de mourir*. Plus précisément, c'est un opéra de László Melis et András Jeleš (sur la base des textes<sup>8</sup> établis par András Forgách – qui sont les traductions des lettres de Kleist, des témoignages du double suicide du poète et d'Henriette Vogel, du procès-verbal après la découverte des corps...).

La « devise » de ce spectacle pourrait être une lettre de Kleist, adressée à sa sœur, dont la formule finale est : « Fait à Stimming, à côté de Potsdam, au matin de ma mort » (le 21 novembre 1811) ».

Tout au long du spectacle, nous sommes témoins d'un seul moment dans son prolongement (on se demande : est-ce que ce moment peut durer jusqu'à l'éternité ?) À la place d'une histoire continue, on voit une série des états (dans leur discontinuité). Nous sommes témoins d'une enquête sans aucun

<sup>1</sup> le 23 septembre (pour la mémoire de la première représentation de la *Tragédie de l'Homme* d'Imre Madách en 1863)

<sup>2</sup> JELES András: *József és testvérei* in: *Filmvilág*

<sup>3</sup> JELES András: *Szenvedéstörténet* in: *Színház*, 1997. márc.

<sup>4</sup> JELES András: *Büntető század*, Budapest, Kijarat, 2000.

<sup>5</sup> JELES András: *Teremtés, lídercenyomás*, Budapest, Kijarat, 2006.

<sup>6</sup> FORGÁCH András: *Valami Figaró-féle alak*, Budapest, Neoprológus, 1993.

<sup>7</sup> JELES András: „Levél a B.B.S. tagságának egy Színházi Laboratórium létrehozásáról” in: *Művilág*, Budapest, Bölcsészindex, 1995.

<sup>8</sup> FORGÁCH András: *Kleist meghal, Újhold évkönyv*, 1990. 1.sz. 211-233.

résultat (on ne sait jamais le motif de l'acte suicidaire, on ne comprend pas ce désir, si funeste). Jusqu'au dernier moment des actes, l'action (le double-suicide) reste une énigme.

Dans sa mise en scène, András Jeles a élaboré une esthétique de « théâtre de marionnettes » (dont le fondateur était Heinrich von Kleist). Au cadre de cette représentation, le plateau avait deux niveaux (pour les acteurs et pour les musiciens). Derrière les acteurs, il y avait un décor idyllique (baroque, qui représentait le « Paradis quitté »). Mais le plupart du plateau restait vide. Les acteurs étaient présents comme les poupées. Ils portèrent les costumes (comme les masques). Ils étaient presque immobiles (ils bougèrent comme les automates). Leurs récita-tions furent hésitantes, comme les bégaiements pénibles à entendre, contrairement aux arias et ensemble. C'était un spectacle ambigu, dont en tous les moments il y avait une tonalité pathétique à côté des effets comiques. Jeles a joué (comme il jouait toujours) avec les contraires, les contrastes, les contradictions. Chez lui, à côté du « pathos » il y a aliénation. Idylle, harmonie et climat désertique sont co-présents. Tout se passe dans un « no man's land », dans un temps de l'intervalle entre le jour et la nuit ; c'est-à-dire, au matin de la mort)

### La re-naissance du théâtre de Péter Halász

Quand András Jeles a commencé de faire de théâtre, Peter Halász avait déjà quitté la Hongrie. Il était le centre de la « subculture » hongroise : pendant les années 70, il a fondé le Stúdió Kassák, après il a fait un théâtre dans son appartement à la rue Dohány (un lieu de rencontre pour les artistes indépendants, révolutionnaires). Comme A. Jeles a témoigné dans une lettre : « Il faut dire pour les lecteurs, qui ont peu d'information sur ces temps anciens, il faut leur dire que ça existait, qu'il y eût un Lieu où les spectateurs allèrent pour se purifier. Où les acteurs ne jouèrent pas des tragédies, mais - comme les Chrétiens disaient - ils furent eux-mêmes la tragédie... Le théâtre que vous fûtes, c'était tellement brûlant que ma jeunesse. »<sup>9</sup>

Halász était émigré avec son groupe en 1976 vers l'Europe de l'Ouest, après ils sont parti ensemble pour les Etats-Unis, où ils ont fondé le Squat et le Love Theater. Au début des années 90' ils ont fait une tournée européenne, et c'était leur premier retour à la Hongrie.

En 1991, A. Jeles a adressé une lettre publique à Peter Halász, intitulé *Lettre pour le nouveau monde*. Il a fait avertir son ami : « Prépare toi à ta renaissance ! »

La re-naissance du théâtre de Halász en Hongrie a commencé avec une pièce qui a montré « la renaissance avant-garde » ; avec un spectacle intitulé *Piero della Francesca Cabaret* dont le sujet était le conflit entre l'artiste avant-garde et son public, son époque (n'importe quelle époque). Ce cabaret ironique et improvisateur était tout à fait différent que les spectacles très concrètes et stylisées, longuement répétés de Jeles. Jeles a écrit ses propres spectacles, dont il travaillait avec les archétypes, pourtant il utilisait un cadre métaphorique (les citations : Goethe, Dostoïevski, Weöres, et la musique : Bach, Schubert...). Pour évoquer les oppositions, disons que le théâtre de Halász était comique, celui de Jeles plutôt tragique. Comme Péter Nádas (écrivain hongrois, très célèbre) a remarqué après un spectacle de Jeles : « On pourrait périr d'un tel spectacle. »<sup>10</sup>

### Une collaboration échouée

C'était une évidence, que le théâtre de Jeles était opposé au théâtre de Halász. Jeles ne croyait pas à la « profession théâtrale », aux acteurs innocents (il préférerait travailler avec les civils, les prisonnières, les SDFs). Il faisait un théâtre rituel qui était en recherche de la sacralité profane. À sa part, Halász luttait aussi contre les stéréotypes de la profession théâtrale. Contrairement à Jeles, il faisait un théâtre quotidien (théâtre de journaux) qui « n'était pas plus de vie, mais déjà du théâtre ».

Néanmoins, en 2000, ils ont fondé ensemble un nouveau théâtre, le Théâtre de la Cité (à la banlieue). Ce nouveau théâtre était une provocation, une révolte en isolation. La fondation de ce groupe était un *Entrée* et un *Exodus* de la culture subventionnée. C'était l'extrémité institutionnalisée, car leur devise restait : « Il faut provoquer les scandales ». Comme Halász a déclaré dans plusieurs interviews : « Malgré le fait que nos productions sont très différentes dans leurs styles, ils sont très proches en mentalité, qui est à la base des productions. On va faire un théâtre scandaleusement bien, on va faire de révolte ! ». En vérité, ce théâtre avec son « Janus visage » a affronté avec beaucoup de problèmes. Les deux fondateurs ont travaillé avec des codes théâtraux différents, ils avaient les conceptions opposées. Finalement, Halász a réussi de faire un « théâtre de la blague », Jeles a subi un échec de faire un « théâtre de la magie ». Dans un an, leur coopération s'est arrêtée, les deux laboratoires se sont désintégrés.

Pourtant sans regarder ses conséquences tristes, examinons plutôt leur intérêt commun. Tournons notre regard vers le théâtre et l'esthétique de marionnettes, pour s'en tirer un exemple éclairant et illustratif.

### L'esthétique du théâtre de marionnettes

On peut avoir un étonnement de voir l'intéressement des deux artistes sur le théâtre de marionnettes. Ils prenaient un grand plaisir à la pantomime et « mimique » de ces poupées car selon leurs opinions, non seulement un danseur (comme chez Kleist) mais un acteur (comme chez Craig<sup>11</sup>) peut s'en retirer maint enseignement.

Dans l'essai très célèbre de Kleist intitulé *Sur le théâtre de marionnettes*<sup>12</sup>, on entend un dialogue (« séducteur ») entre Monsieur C (danseur à l'opéra) et le Narrateur. Je cite le Narrateur : « Il me demanda si je n'avais pas, à la vérité, trouvé beaucoup de grâce à certains mouvements de ces poupées, lorsqu'elles dansent... Tout mouvement, disait-il, a son centre de gravité ; il suffisait de maîtriser ce point à l'intérieur de la figure... et chaque fois que le centre de gravité décrivait une ligne droite, les membres, eux, évoluaient déjà selon des courbes... ». Cette ligne donc, qui décrit le centre de gravité est « fort simple » et, sous un autre aspect, « très mystérieux ». Car elle n'est finalement rien d'autre que « le chemin décrit par l'âme du danseur ». Notre question se pose ici : Comment connaître cet itinéraire ? Comment le maîtriser ?

L'essai met en question le rôle du machiniste, c'est-à-dire, celui du metteur en scène moderne. Pour découvrir ce chemin, le machiniste devrait se placer au centre de gravité de la marionnette, ce qui revient à dire : en dansant. Peter

<sup>9</sup> JELES András: Levél az újjávilágra (Halász Péternek), in: *Teremtés, lídercnyomás*, 122-125.

<sup>10</sup> NÁDAS Péter: Jeles színházi napja in: *Töredékek Jeles András naplójából*, Budapest, Nyolc és fél Bt, 1993.

<sup>11</sup> Edward Gordon CRAIG: *On the art of the theatre*, London, William Heinemann, 1911.

<sup>12</sup> Heinrich von KLEIST: *Sur le théâtre de marionnettes*, trad. Jean-Claude Schneider, Paris, Séquences, 1991.

Halász a accepté ce conseil. Dans son théâtre, il était toujours l'acteur principal. Dans cette perspective, il faut que le metteur en scène expérimente cette danse mécanique et magique. Le champ de ce mouvement des poupées est certes limité, mais ceux qu'ils sont en mesure d'exécuter, ils les accomplissent avec un calme, une aisance et une grâce qui plongent dans l'étonnement les esprits attentifs. On y voit une harmonie, mobilité, légèreté à un degré supérieur. Mais ajoutons, qu'en ce point, c'est impossible à l'homme d'attendre la perfection du mannequin. Comme Kleist remarque, seul un dieu, en ce domaine, pourrait se mesurer à la matière. Cette grâce n'existe que pour les marionnettes et pour Dieu. Les hommes (après avoir goûté à l'Arbre de la Connaissance) ont provoqué les désordres, les dissonances inévitables : ils ont perdu la grâce.

Le texte de Kleist peut être considéré comme un texte parfait, une écriture gracieuse, sur la perte de grâce. Le Narrateur dit : « J'affirmai alors bien connaître les désordres provoqués dans la grâce naturelle de l'homme par la conscience ». Dans ce texte, la grâce consiste dans la parallèle entre un ours dangereux et un beau jeune homme, qui est presque divin. Comme conclusion, le Narrateur ajoute : « Nous voyons que dans le monde organique, lorsque la réflexion s'affaiblit, s'obscurcit, la grâce y gagne ». La grâce : c'est la perfection inconsciente, c'est l'absence de la conscience. C'est un état impossible à retrouver. « L'expression biblique *Le Chute* est la paraphrase du fait que nous avons détruit l'Eden et la maison natale, nous sommes les vagabondes dans un monde étranger, et nous bégayons car nous avons oublié notre langue. »<sup>13</sup> - écrivait A. Jeles dans son livre d'aphorismes. (*Bataillon disciplinaire*). On peut remarquer qu'au début des années 2000, Jeles a voulu continuer ses recherches sur l'esthétique de marionnettes (après l'expérience de *Kleist est en train de mourir*). Il a projeté de faire un spectacle sur la base de la musique de Schubert (*Voyage d'hiver*). Dans cette intention, il a adressé une lettre aux acteurs dont il avait présenté ses idées sur son propre théâtre de marionnettes. Je voudrais re-présenter cette lettre-manifestation d'un projet inachevé.

### Lettre aux acteurs de »Voyage d'hiver«<sup>14</sup>

Selon ce dessin, les acteurs sont présents à la scène comme poupées, car l'acteur comme poupée est une créature magnifique qui a des aptitudes magiques. Pour que ce soit possible, il faut que l'acteur assimile une poupée. Jeles nomme cet «acte» par le terme l'appropriation. L'appropriation est un processus qui demande beaucoup de patience, de l'attention et de temps. C'est une observation infaillible, une reconstruction stricte.

Après l'appropriation, l'acteur vit la simplicité, l'intemporalité et l'intensité des poupées. Il faut qu'il montre et garde une expression (l'expression du visage de la poupée choisie par lui) qui est sûre et unique (mais qui est indéfinissable). Pour l'acteur, il n'existe que cet unique visage, que ce seul - mais éternel - sentiment dans le visage. Cette expression éternelle, vitale ne disparaît qu'avec la disparition physique (elle s'est réduite en cendres). Dans cette intensité existe le pouvoir théâtral des poupées, des masques.

« L'effet du masque » consiste dans le fait que - pendant tout est en vie autour de lui - l'acteur réagit avec un seul visage

(personnage). Ce qui donne l'atmosphère des poupées, des masques, des statues archaïques : « Ils sont magnifiques, parce qu'ils sont inexpressifs ! » . Jeles ajoute que les hommes religieux peuvent connaître cette situation. Quand ils regardent leurs idoles avec tension, tristesse, passion ... les statues répondent avec l'expression convenable (sur le visage inchangé, immobile, mort).

Pour reprendre le texte, les poupées pourraient être nos compagnons simples et captivants tout au long du *Voyage d'hiver*. En quoi consiste-t-il ce voyage ? En citant Kleist : « Il nous faut entreprendre un voyage autour du monde et voir si peut-être il n'est pas, par derrière, quelque part, ouvert à nouveau »<sup>15</sup>. Les poupées pourraient être notre guide, car ils sont les êtres médiateurs (comme les démons ou les anges), ils sont les passages entre la vie et la mort, le réel et l'imaginaire.

L'acteur-poupée exerce la limitation de soi (qui lui donne la plus forte expression). Selon ce projet de travail, pendant la représentation, il y aura peine de mouvement et de parole. Les mouvements et les paroles, tous ces événements théâtraux sont comme les catastrophes. Catastrophes, dont les poupées sont les facteurs et les victimes. Les poupées sont très maladroites, très naïves. Elles sont inexpérimentées au monde humain. Leur naïveté est presque divine. Ils existent avec une présence étrange. Leur étrangeté consiste dans l'inconvenance cohérente de l'expression, ce qui donne, à la fin, leur présence dramatique.

L'ambition de Jeles était de montrer que - pendant la répétition - l'acteur-poupée pouvait naître. Plus précisément, comme dans la *Genèse*, quelqu'un va naître du rien. Le théâtre d'András Jeles, qui veut travailler constamment au domaine de la mort, est à la recherche de la création. Néanmoins, il avoue que : « Pour l'homme, créer n'est pas possible » - mais il ajoute : « Pourtant, on essaie - c'est l'art - étant en désaccord avec soi-même, avec horreur, avec angoisse, car nous craignons la liberté imprévisible, chaotique. En vérité, pour nous, toutes les créations sont les cauchemars »<sup>16</sup>.

À nos regrets, le spectacle de *Voyage d'hiver* n'était pas venu comme un événement théâtral. Après cet échec, jusqu'à nos jours, Jeles continue ses recherches au domaine de cinéma. Son théâtre imaginaire reste encore un rêve.

### La dernière performance de Halász

Pour parler sur Halász, il était (c'est absurde et incroyable, mais il faut que je parle en passé) un «réalisateur»<sup>17</sup>. Quelqu'un, qui a mis en vie - par ses mises en scènes - le réel. Pour finir, je voudrais évoquer sa dernière performance.

Le 6 février 2006, un catafalque était posé au foyer du Musée de l'Art Contemporain. Halász eut occupé sa place dans son cercueil, bien avant sa dernière séance. Les invitées pour cette cérémonie profane furent ses amis (qu'ils prononcèrent les éloges funèbres). On peut remarquer, entre parenthèse, que de cette *cérémonie d'adieu* András Jeles resta absent.

Après cet événement, Péter Halász est quitté son pays natal pour jamais. Cette dernière performance signifia pour lui la « pre-présentation » réel de cette scène unique et imaginaire - en vérité, ça fut la répétition générale de sa mort.

<sup>13</sup> JELES András: *Büntető század*, 15.

<sup>14</sup> JELES András: Levél a „Téli utazás” című produkció színészeihez, in: *Teremtés, lidércnyomás*, 141-145.

<sup>15</sup> KLEIST *Ibid.* 27.

<sup>16</sup> Préface pour le *Teremtés, lidércnyomás*

<sup>17</sup> FORGÁCH András: A travesztia virágkora, *Alföld*, 2001, 2.sz.

## THE POETICS OF MEDITERRANEAN ARCHITECTURE: CONTINUITIES THROUGH RUPTURES

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**T**he claim around which this paper is articulated is the view that of all the geographical cultures of the world, the Mediterranean has given form to a way of living and celebrating which has created similar qualities in the architecture of its many different racial, social and religious communities. Notwithstanding the great variety of architectural production over millennia, and despite the regional differences in climate and local materials, this paper presents an interpretation of the architecture that is found around the Mediterranean as a symbiosis of certain aesthetic qualities. Although this may be seen as a generalization, and although counter arguments can be made pointing to the existence of similar qualities in other architectures, I believe that the Mediterranean presents a unique case and that one could clearly point to a continuity between cultures and histories. One could furthermore often assess that political and historic ruptures have also contributed to the awareness of a regional heritage as in the case of the Ottomans who succeeded the Byzantine.

**T**he Mediterranean has been one of the most original and fertile sources of human culture and history, and is still one of the richest sources of cultural memory, in terms of its archaeological, agricultural and artistic heritage. The geography with the great contrasts of rocky mountains, highland and the turquoise coasts and depths, the Mediterranean as the fluid melting pot of many diverse civilizations and races, the Mediterranean as the birthplace of cities of culture in many diverse forms, the birthplace of many species of flora and fauna; the Mediterranean as the birthplace of the modern State. All these diversities and riches are reflected in Mediterranean architecture.

**T**he Mediterranean, before and beyond anything else, is a culture, and should be seen foremost as a special Habitat. Every bit of nature has contributed in detail to the development of the Mediterranean as culture and has also evolved a somewhat common human type in spite of all the diversity it possesses. The poetics of the Mediterranean is before anything else, due to the quality of its many peoples who have principally approached life with poetry and joy, in spite of the deep awareness of the tragic, as Nietzsche has so beautifully expressed.<sup>1</sup>

**M**illions of years ago, the great sea Tethys extended between the west Indies and the Pacific. What we know of the Mediterranean today, erupted from the depths of the Tethys to form a kind of necklace around what remained to be the Mediterranean Sea: The Caucauses, the Atlas, the Balkans, the Alps, Apennines, and the Taurus. As Braudel describes, the traces of this process have remained all around, as a rich heritage in geology: the beautiful limestone queries, the marbles of Italy, the coralline limestones of Malta, the Istrian stones of Venice and the coastal rock formations had all been heaved up from the depths of the sea.<sup>2</sup>

**B**raudel begins his book by declaring that commonly the Mediterranean is known as the land of La Dolce Vita, but that for all its beauty it is a land of ongoing fight for survival and ongoing struggle amongst the elements and a tortured geology. From the Red Sea to the Atlantic the faults are everywhere, creating riches as well as disasters with the floods, vulcanos and the earthquakes. The typical Mediterranean landscape is that of mountains piled one on top of another, and of the sea, which are both sources of freedom and of confinement. In talking about this geographic dichotomy Braudel relates it to ways of life and culture. "Up in the high country, only the most primitive ways of life could hold and somehow survive. The Mediterranean plains, for lack of space are mostly confined to a few ... pockets of arable land. ... Worse still the plains, were often invaded by floodwaters and had to be reclaimed from inhospitable marshland."<sup>3</sup>

**A**ccording to Braudel these "lowlands which called for land improvement could be occupied by hierarchical societies ... These were the opposite of the high perched hill settlements, poor but free. People who lived on the plains felt themselves to be superior, but their cities ... were always under the threat of attack." ... "Dramatic descents from the mountains took place in every period and in every region of the sea. Mountain people – eaters of acorns and chestnuts, hunters of wild beasts, traders in furs, hides or young livestock, always ready to strike camp and move on—formed a perpetual contrast to the lowlanders who remained bound to the soil, some as masters some as slaves, but all part of a society based on working the land, a society with armies,

cities and seagoing ships. The plains aimed for progress, the hills for survival.<sup>4</sup>

In describing the struggle between the coast, the sea plains and the desert, which neighbor each other Braudel again draws attention to the strife between the nomad and the sedentary: "Every successful civilization on the mediterranean coast was obliged to define its stance towards the mountain dweller and the nomad, whether exploiting them, fighting them off, reaching some compromise with one or other ..."<sup>5</sup>

This dynamics and strife still continues today, albeit in different forms. The nomad may no longer be the one coming from the mountains but those who migrate from the poorer regions, from the south to the north. Fernand Braudel's descriptions make explicit to what extent the architecture, or the forms of habitat imagined and constructed by the Mediterranean peoples, take their many forms, whether vernacular, classical or modern, from the effort to harmonize with its topography, its materials and its climate. Mediterranean architecture, in its varied examples from the early Greek temples which house a sacred representation and take their form according to the play of light on color and material, and according to their visibility from the land, or in the examples of Hadrian's fantastic creations of pools and arcades and bridges and rooms for solitude and reflection, or underground dormitories and passages for slaves in Tivoli, or Corbusier's Villa Savoy, attests to forms of adaptation and forms of admiration for the land and the landscape. The inner court, the balcony, the veranda, the portico, the colonnaded arcade, the pool, the second storey that juts out to the street (the cantilever), the separation of the private and the public, the garden kiosk, the well, the airy spacious furnishing that is part of the architecture, the kitchen, the bath are still in use whether directly in the vernacular or as inspiration to modern examples; they can be traced all the way back to the descriptions in Homer's *Odyssey*, or to archeological examples.

The simplicity of architectural forms are enriched by their relation to the land, and to the light. Geometric forms take on light and shade and become beautiful in their relationship to the exterior. This results in a kind of monumentality even in the most modest forms.

Forest and mountain architecture are conceived in different colors than on the coast. Added to this is the special feeling for materials which come directly from the land and which absorb its light. Marble, stone, wood, tile or plaster reveal their qualities so much more intensely in the Mediterranean light which is always moving with the play of the varied flora like the olive tree, the yellow pine, the cyprus, bending in the many breezes.

Whatever the architecture, vernacular, sacred or monumental, it cannot be seen without its surrounding flora that create myriad shades and shadows. But language cannot cover one very important quality that surrounds Mediterranean architecture: the million different aromas and smells that come with the breeze from the sea, from the bitter sweet fig leaf, from the tomato under the sun, from the geranium, the jasmine, the lemony magnolia, the pine, etc.

We can also talk about some continuing features that are typical. **Centrality**, in the form of the inside court, covered or open, the central hall to which all the rooms open, or the dome; the **three dimensionality** in the vertical as a building adapts itself to the topography; this creates different eye levels and relationships where the **staircase** becomes the important actor; the separation between **private and public** is a basic aspect of the social structure that is reflected in spaces; different layers of opening to the exterior, such as the iron grill, the glass, the sunshades; the garden pavillion, the articulation of the wall just to receive the light.

In viewing the Mediterranean as Habitat, one has to understand how seemingly different cultures like the Moslem or the Christian, have synthesized under the intense and impressive qualities of existence in the Mediterranean. The Mediterranean Habitat as an environment shows general signs whether it belongs to Islam, Gentile or Jew. In the *Book on the Mediterranean*, Braudel and his colleague Maurice Aymard, talk about the house as the space for women and their production, and the public space, whether it is the town square or piazza, or the Sug of the Medina (bazaar of the Islamic city) as the stage for men. The house is not just a shelter but rather a space that separates the family from the rest of the society and creates a private realm which is the honor of the male. The public space, the piazza or the sug, is not so much a place for work, but for a kind of idleness where men show off their virility, and take part in the social interaction. Idleness, in this geography which requires constant effort for survival, is the norm of the everyday theatre, especially for men. Maynard describes the Mediterranean house as a complex space, All the directions and the walls, are given different symbolic names, such as 'plastered by the trowel of the lord of the house', or 'painted white with the hand of the wife'. The hearth of the house is sacred and cannot be crossed except with special care. Just across from the door is placed the loom. As we know, each region in Anatolia has its own special carpet or rug, in each house the woman is constantly weaving for clothes, sacks, wall and floor rugs. This portion across from the door, where the visitors are accepted, is the area which harmonizes the qualities of light and dark, night and day, male and female.<sup>6</sup>

Another important quality of Mediterranean Habitat is that in history we always have seen that even a thousand people, a small community was enough to form a city. This is because of the diversification of human talents and aspirations which have evolved with the constant human struggle against the forces of nature. In the Mediterranean, the farm and the village are dependent on the town to sell their goods, and for the peasant to find work in the winter months. What has historically made the special civilization of the Mediterranean, from the towns of the Magrib, to those of Mozarabic Spain and Andalusia, to Southern France and Italy, to the Adriatic coast and Greece and Anatolia, is the rich diversity and number of cities, all with their special identities and productions and all in many social and architectural ways somewhat similar. The Mediterranean is basically a city culture even for the dead, since distant history.<sup>7</sup>

Vernacular architecture of the Mediterranean, whether on mountain or plain, will show similar spatial qualities such as elevated structure from the ground, a centralized

lobby to which all rooms open, different possibilities of opening to the exterior through layers of doors and windows (transparent, gridded, semi-transparent, closed), insulated walls, bath and kitchen within the exterior court, etc. These will vary slightly according to local climate and materials. On high terrain, stone will be the basic material, in arid parts, the mud brick and on forested areas, wood would be the basic construction material. The structures may change accordingly. On the other hand, with monumental or prestige architecture the similarities in form are more constant between cultures and regions. Stone is generally the chosen material for monumental, religious buildings. While wood may be chosen for palatial structures, in various cultures, the way these materials are articulated scarcely differ. As remarkable examples, we can look at similarities between Venetian water palaces, and the wooden villas around the Bosphorous in Istanbul, all relatively from similar periods, and even the first palace built by Mehmet Conqueror in the 15<sup>th</sup> century in Istanbul. The colonnated balconies, the articulation of the frontal elevations, the rows of windows or doors creating a rhythmic patterning, seem to come from a similar sensibility.

One of the important characteristics of monumental Mediterranean architecture is the effect of historic continuity on the architectural forms. From the Greek and the Etruscan to the Roman and the Hittite and later the Byzantine and Arabic and Ottoman, the handing over of lands from one culture to another has created a kind of historical and political consciousness which has also created a continuity in the architecture. One could cite endless examples. Let me focus on the well known examples of the Pantheon, the Hagia Sophia, the Dome of the Rock (which is the first great Islamic monument), the Seljukid Karatay Madrasa in Konya and the Mosque of Suleiman the Magnificent in Istanbul. The structural and plan similarities between the Hagia Sophia built in 537 and the mosque of Suleiman built in 1557 go beyond the practicalities of engineering. When Suleiman became accepted as the greatest of all monarchs, after the treaty made with Charles V, his claim to sovereignty over both the Christian and the Moslem, was expressed in the symbolic similarity to Justinian's church which was inspired by the temple of Solomon. Suleiman also claimed the ancestry of Solomon through his name. The plan which is conditioned by the supporting half domes on the north south axis is very similar to that of the Hagia Sophia, albeit that the ambience of the interior and the size of the buildings greatly differ.<sup>8</sup> In almost all of these structures, the centrality of the main hall around which usually a colonnated space is enveloped, the emphasis put on the dome, the quality of light, especially in the Seljukid and Ottoman examples, the priority given to the structural qualities of the buildings in conveying the aesthetic ambience, have great similarities. They are obviously generically related, as are the people who have built them. Besides, from the exterior, all these buildings have a sculptural quality. They are composite structures which, viewed from a distance are perceived as possible to grasp in the palm of a hand.<sup>9</sup> Then, there are other continuities which are more conscious, as with the example of the Baroque architect Borromini, as he consciously studied Hadrian's buildings in Tivoli and applied many specific forms to his religious buildings. The campanile structures in S.

Agnese and in S. Andrea della Fratte in Rome are directly taken from Hadrian examples. One can also mention how both Byzantine and Ottoman architects accorded a special attention to the quality of light, although towards different goals. Notwithstanding, the oculus remained an important element that would bring light centrally, all the way from the Roman to the Seljukid, Ottoman, Renaissance and Baroque examples. As the Byzantine churches searched for a mystical and enigmatic quality of light that was enhanced by artificial lights and reflections from the mosaics, the Ottomans favored direct penetration of light through many windows. Some of these windows were of colored glass, creating a kaleidoscopic effect on the walls, similar to those of Gothic structures. The blue tiles that were used on some of the Ottoman mosque interiors also created reflections, along with the glass faunas of oil lamps. Certainly, one of the most fascinating aesthetic qualities of the Mediterranean is the quality of light which, as the impressionists so well represented, is a light full of color. The great Selimiye Mosque, built by Sinan in Edirne takes notice of this in a wonderful manner.<sup>10</sup> In the evenings, the pink light from the west bades the building in pink tones and creates a tapestry of rose in the outer court. This awareness and aesthetic use of light continues with the architecture of Le Corbusier as seen in his Savoy Villa and the Marseille apartment building and in the work of a more recent Swiss /Italian architect Mario Botta in his typically Mediterranean architecture.

As a last point which would place the architecture within a specific context, one has to look at the approach to nature within the city. The inner courtyard, which may have stemmed from the early Greek or Roman colonnated house, is one of the most effective features of Mediterranean architecture, in that, not only does it effect the formation of the house, but it also effects the city. All Mediterranean cities are cities that are turned inwards and that have domesticated nature. Nature in the Mediterranean city is not an exterior but a core, interior element. If we take a bird's eye view at Marseille, for example, or any Mediterranean city, we shall see very little green in the common areas. The city of the Magreb, likewise, such as Tunis, are labyrinthian cities, where circulation through the narrow streets sensitizes the body to light and shade, to sharp turns, to sound coming from interiors, or from the turn of the road ahead.<sup>11</sup> On the other hand, nature becomes a privatized and domesticated element. The court that is surrounded by walls and that is often entered through the house becomes a symbolic paradise, a private realm, a haven with water and green and bird song. It is the family's most private realm which may be opened to guests at special times. In the Christian context this garden would even often house an altar to which offerings and candles are placed. In central Anatolia this is where women often do their work, and often the kitchen is placed here. The pergola with the vine or jasmine is a typical element. In Andalusia, the inner walls are decorated with flower pots and in almost all examples the existence of a well guarantees water in many regions where the summers are dry.

It is impossible to encompass all the different aesthetic qualities and the thousands of examples of similar architecture from the Mediterranean. One point which we could conclude and summarize with is the great simplicity of Mediterranean



architecture which has always inspired a sense of monumentality and luxury in making use of light, of color and of basic geometries that stand in contrast to nature, but in reality, that diffuse with it in a symbiotic relationship. Even when we see great ruptures or contrasts, a common use creates relationships amongst these. For example, the white wash in the vernacular architecture creates a unity; in some cities like Urbino in Italy, which has lived through different cultures over millennia, the exclusive use of brick relates every form to each other. When such conscious uses fail, it is the soft light again bringing differences close to each other. This aspect has been very succinctly pointed to in the paintings of the French impressionists whose landscapes often included architectural elements. These painters were very aware of the common quality of Mediterranean architecture and how this shared quality was highlighted by the quality of light. Paintings of Utrillo and Cézanne could be referred to.

In this paper I have tried to show how the varieties and differences throughout history and amongst cultures, in the Mediterranean, have, in essence, basic common aesthetic features that originate from the peoples' approach to life and their efforts to live in harmony with nature. Also, the historical and political continuities and ruptures have likewise created a conscious effort in the architect's approaches to lay claim to historic examples. Although both very rich in their respective examples, the vernacular and the monumental and palatial architectures also have similarities in their general simplicity. I have also tried to show how, in whatever culture or urban context, the approach to nature has been rather similar and certain examples have been favored commonly amongst different cultures and in different historic times. The inner courtyard is a common element all the way from Magrip to Spain to central Anatolia. This feature has created, at least till the era of Modernism, a certain urban ambience where nature is domesticated and where the city is a dry, stone or brick conglomeration. Thus we see that both in the vernacular, in the more monumental architecture and in the urban context, 'the Mediterranean' means a common approach to life which has created its own common forms, even if there may exist many exceptions to the rule.

#### (ENDNOTES)

<sup>1</sup> Friedrich Nietzsche, 'The Birth of Tragedy'.

<sup>2</sup> Fernand Braudel, *Memory and the Mediterranean*, ed. Roselyne de Ayala and Paule Braudel, translated by Sian Reynolds, Vintage Books, New York, 2001, pp. 3-16.

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.* p. 6.

<sup>4</sup> *Ibid.* p. 7.

<sup>5</sup> *Ibid.* p. 7.

<sup>6</sup> Fernand Braudel, *La Mediterranee, 'Les Espaces- Maurice Aymard'*, Translated into Turkish by Necati Erkuş, Metis, Istanbul 1977, p. 131.

<sup>7</sup> *Ibid.* pp. 122-130.

<sup>8</sup> Jale N. Erzen, *Sinan Ottoman Architect*, METU Faculty of Architecture Press, Ankara, 2004, p.

<sup>9</sup> *Ibid.* p. 82.

<sup>10</sup> *Ibid.* p. 129.

<sup>11</sup> Jale Erzen, *Kent Estetiği ve Kültürel Kapsam, 'Afife Batur'a Armağan'*, Literatür, Istanbul 2005, p. 327-333 (Aesthetics of the City and the Cultural Context).

## INTERCULTURALISM AND THE CONTEMPORARY ARTISTIC DEBATE: THE CASES OF MUNTADAS, ALÿS AND SIERRA

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We would like to put the contents of this paper in a kind of cultural history in which we have proposed the substitution of the concepts of rupture and return, originality and appropriation, authorship, deconstruction and the death of the author, for the concepts of internationalism, nationalism, diaspora, multiculturalism, globalism, new internationalism, locality and interculturalism, which seem to respond to a common denominator: their proximity to the word culture beyond that of art and their commitment to the question of identity beyond language.

We think that Visual Culture, with its interdisciplinary vocation, with its interest in anthropology, sociology and culture (here the *pictorial turn* goes beside the *cultural turn*<sup>1</sup>), and with its renewed concept of "social visuality" (which has few to do with the sociological, Marxist component belonging to Cultural Studies), is that which at the present time contributes in a more radical manner to opening the disciplinary structure of the humanities and which challenges the field of art history and its canon linked to "Western culture" and its universality.<sup>2</sup>

What is more, we believe this cultural visuality<sup>3</sup> understood as a "third phase" in between Visual Studies and Cultural Studies is the most suitable with our global space:<sup>4</sup> a space metaphorically "without borders" that can seem like the consolidation of the utopic agenda of the "global village" that Marshall McLuhan put forth in the seventies.<sup>5</sup> A space in which new concepts are definitively imposed. For example, the concepts of identity and difference that suppose a tenser relationship between the nation-state and the new

post-national states: "What's emerging, asserts Arjun Appadurai (and this will connect to a very important part of our discourse, the search for locality), are powerful alternative forms of organization for the traffic of resources, images and ideas, forms that either actively challenge the nation-state or are antagonistic peaceful alternatives that constitute large-scale political loyalties."<sup>6</sup>

Following Appadurai, we are now belonging to a post-national world in which the appearance of a new ethnicity is imposed that's capable of attracting people and groups that due to their spatial dispersion are much vaster than the ethnic groups studied by traditional anthropology. An ethnicity that, far from being linked with the "primordialist" practices of the nation-state, is transnational and lays claim to a new understanding of the relationship between history and social agency, the realms of affection and politics, the large-scale factors and the local ones.

This is the world in which a growing number of artists work such as FrAntoni Muntadas, Francis Alÿs and Santiago Sierra.

The artist **Antoni Muntadas** is perhaps the most significant artist within this concept of what's global, which he has tackled in his work-in-progress *On Translation* (1996- ) of whom today we present one of his latest projects, the Spanish pavilion in the 2005 Venice Biennial. In this case, the Pavilion, named *On Translation*, has become a "laboratory" where the different mechanisms that mediate among the Pavilion itself (place-nation), the *Giardini* (physical, scenic and above all discursive place) and the Biennial (place-territory) interact from.<sup>7</sup>

In this complex process, the *Giardini* assume an essential role, metaphor of a microcity within the macrocity that is Venice (*City Museum*). The *Giardini*, according to Muntadas, have become obsolete as carriers of a false map of the world that situated some countries on the map but left others in oblivion. In any case, it's well-known that since their creation in 1895 the *Giardini* followed the model of world's fairs in

<sup>1</sup> Frederic Jameson, *The Cultural Turn. Selected Writings on the Postmodern 1983-1998*, London and New York, Verso, 2000.

<sup>2</sup> Cherry Beborah, "Art History Visual Culture", in *Art History*, vol. 27, 4, September 2004, pp. 479-493.

<sup>3</sup> Mieke Bal, "Visual essentialism and the object of visual culture", in *Journal of Visual Culture*, vol. 2, 1, April 2003, pp. 5-33.

<sup>4</sup> Susan Buck-Morss, "Images in the Mind: Visual Studies and Global Imagination", in *ArtUS*, 5-6, January-February 2005 special issue.

<sup>5</sup> Our understanding of globalisation is quite different from Marshall McLuhan's 1960s notion of the "global village", in which globalisation produced a new colonising consciousness incommensurable with the consciousness of other technologies. See Ian McLean, "On the Edge of Change? Art, Globalisation and Cultural Difference", in *Third Text*, vol. 18, 3, 2004, p. 293.

<sup>6</sup> Arjun Appadurai, *Modernity at Large*, Minneapolis, University of Minnesota Press, 1996, p. 177.

<sup>7</sup> Muntadas: *On Translation: I Giardini*, Spanish Pavilion, 51st Venice Biennale (exhibition catalogue), 2005.

which different countries came together and competed under the common denominator of what constituted "the world." This is the very model that Muntadas seeks to combat. But more than the *Giardino* as a "place," Muntadas' true reflection revolves around the Spanish pavilion and its relationship with the concept of nation, or rather of post-nation, with the following reconsideration of the concepts of identity and difference: "The idea of the Pavilion as the representation of a country"—affirms Muntadas in an interview with Mark Wigley—is obsolete. The structure of the *Giardini* to receive art has been surpassed. The idea nonetheless persists because it works like a theme park and makes it easy for artists to structure their work and see, represent and identify things.<sup>8</sup>

It follows that his first and most radical intervention is centered on the façade of the Pavilion, on which he has concealed the sign with the word SPAIN (and, implicitly, the idea of "nation") with a large-scale piece from his series *Warning: Perception Requires Participation*). Inside, Muntadas converts the Pavilion's big central space, a great hall measuring 12 by 12 meters, into a transit zone, into a hybrid space close to what Marc Augé calls a non-place: "a place that cannot be defined neither by its identity nor as relational or historic; a place, in short, that is anthropologic. For this "non-place" Muntadas has conceived objects, texts, images and furniture designed not only to be seen by spectators but also to be used by them. Which explains the presence of seats (encounters), of a stand (information), of screens (questions and rumors) and of light boxes (stand by) in an "environment" that so recalls a waiting area at an airport, a real estate office or the vestibule of an informative space. In this sense we would emphasize the inclusion of public phones with an anonymous voice relating the history of the *Giardini* in English and Italian in the manner of an audioguide, and of light boxes (*stand by*) of anonymous people absorbed in queues waiting around in different situations (businesses, immigration offices, leisure spots, museums, airports), reproducing a typical and topical image of so-called cultural tourism ("The protocol entails waiting to see something without knowing exactly what there is to see"), as well as 65 photos of the history of the pavilions as a "map" of a Biennial that was born with the claim of representing the world and which at present day is globalized.

And in a path parallel to the one suggested by some cultural theorists in the postcolonial field, what Muntadas is clearly doing is declaring the concept of nation as a representation of "identity" as antiquated, and is instead thinking of a new ethnicity that would be transnational and would demand a new understanding of the relationship between history and social agency, the realms of feelings and politics, the large-scale factors and the local ones.<sup>10</sup>

From the Belgian-born artist **Francis Alÿs** we present here his works that reflect everything a passer-by can see, hear, perceive and feel within a radius of ten blocks around his studio in Mexico City, in a relationship that reproduces on a micro-scale the relationship between the global and

the local in the geopolitical realms generated by the new map of globalization. Alÿs's vocation to travel and live as a nomad, as well as his concentration in drawing, painting, documentary films, photography, Internet and other media in order to explore the social and economic conditions of the different cities he travels to or lives in, is well known. His "walks" have a lot to do with Baudelaire and Benjamin's idea of the *flâneur*,<sup>11</sup> but above all they recall the practices of the Parisian situationists known as the *dérive* and *détournement*.

For Alÿs the streets and the homeless, street vendors, animals (especially dogs), pedestrians strolling in Zócalo square, an urbanistic place that's also very significant politically, acquire an anthropological dimension that brings his attitude close to that of ethnographer, interested in local phenomena, and even more in inframiniscule social phenomena.

His visuality is, besides, always connected to the action of "walking" and with a list of activities related to "walking as hiding, telling, adding, crying, asking, keeping, speaking, drinking, snooping, etc". This is the reason for the existence of a group of "collectors", small constructions that incorporate magnets and wheels designed to be dragged across the floor and pick up metallic scraps, associating the artist with the role of the "draper" and the city as a place where collecting things is the fruit of a hidden economy. But what without a doubt best defines his work are his series of slides (*Sleepers*, 1997-2002 and *Street Vendors* 1992-2002), and his video installations (*If you are a true spectator, what you really do is wait for an accident to happen, Zocalo*, 1996),<sup>12</sup> in which the act of strolling transforms into an act of language in which the narrative coexists with the visual in equal conditions to the point of turning the stroll itself into an almost linguistic "enunciation" space.

Alÿs calls these incursions into urban space "infiltrated actions" and in all of them the idea of intercultural transference is fundamental, where the "one" (Alÿs himself in his role as a foreigner, sometimes as a tourist and "foreign") constantly gets confused with the "other," with the native, the local.<sup>13</sup> In this sense we think Alÿs moves in a purely paradoxical space: he engages his work in an impossible dialogue between the micro and macro, metaphor of the local and the global, or between the mythical and the banal.<sup>14</sup> A paradox that the artist resolves from the double combination

<sup>11</sup> The *flâneur* is arguably the first great type of modernity, a figure summoned into existence with the rise of modern city appearing on the scene, as Walter Benjamin noted, at the moment of the early 19th Century when cities were becoming bustling metropolises. See James Trainor, "Walking the walk: the Artist as Flâneur", in *Border Crossings*, vol. 22, 4, November 2003, pp. 82-92.

<sup>12</sup> In this work, Alÿs follows the movements of a plastic bottle pushed by the wind on the ground of the Zocalo Plaza in Mexico City. Although it appeared that its function as spectator would be entirely passive, soon enough, resides the action of the wind, passers-by began to pick the bottle from one place to another encouraged by the presence of the camera. In the end, nonetheless, the "accident" that the artist was waiting did happen: concentrating on the movements of the empty bottle, Alÿs walked into the street and was hit by a car. The video symbolically proves the impossibility of the artist to keep his distance from the society around him, the end of a fan era in which an unstated contract of non-interference ruled. See Cuauhtémoc Medina, *Francis Alÿs: Walking Distance from the Studio*, Mexico, Antiguo Colegio de San Ildefonso, 2006, p. 48.

<sup>13</sup> As James Trainor pointed out, while everybody else is rushing about this business as usual—travelling to or from jobs and appointments, shopping, eating on the run, doing errands—Alÿs is engaged in an activity that has no outwardly discernable or useful aim. See James Trainor, *op. cit.*, p. 83.

<sup>14</sup> Alÿs, according to Deborah Parsons, would add new maps to the city, those of myth, memory, fantasy, and desire, reading the un-scrolling urban scene like a text, while reinscribing it as he passes. See Deborah Parsons, *Streetwalking in the Metropolis: Women, the City and Modernity*, Oxford, Oxford University Press, 2000.

<sup>8</sup> "A Conversation between Antoni Muntadas and Mark Wigley, New York," in *Muntadas: On Translation*, *op. cit.*, pp. 269-320.

<sup>9</sup> Marc Augé, *Non-lieux. Introduction à une anthropologie de la surmodernité*, Paris, Éditions de Seuil, 1992.

<sup>10</sup> Arjun Appadurai, *op. cit.*, p. 197.

"modesty-imagination": and how parting from this combination he formalizes from the periphery a double attitude of opposition (aesthetical but also political) toward high values, toward the monumental and the demonstrative.<sup>15</sup>

**S**antiago Sierra's work figures within a set of criticisms that throughout the 20<sup>th</sup> century have put into question the belief that art is an autonomous, sublime and disinterested activity. Beginning with his activity in the mid-nineties, Sierra's work explains with modest clarity the repetitive mechanism of the exploitation of workers and the human submission to an economic destiny, denying the supposed purity of art.

In regards to *Wall Enclosing a Space*, his intervention in Spain's Pavilion in the 59 Venice Biennial (2003), it clearly points us to the technologies of intermediation and restricted access represented by borders and limits, both the visible and invisible ones, that situate people in different geographic, social or ideological territories. As Sierra clearly affirms:

"The biennial piece was already marked: it had to talk about the concept of nation, of the representation of Spain, about the significance of those pavilions because you can't forget that the countries that participate in the Biennale are the most powerful ones in the world. I mean, there is no pavilion for Ethiopia. So the theme was already a given. People have received it very well, although the Spanish press took it as a provocation, when it was simply a reflection."<sup>16</sup>

*Wall Enclosing a Space* seems to us as a work particularly symptomatic of our globalized world, a work that requires the anthropological and geopolitical knowledge of a cultural theorist for its interpretation and contextualization. *Wall Enclosing a Space* connects with Arjun Appadurai's ideas of post-nation and his theory of the "social life of visible things." In this sense it's a simple *reductio ad absurdum* of the principle of "national representation" that at the beginning of the 21<sup>st</sup> century still emerges as an organizing principle for a large number of artistic events around the world. In regard to the concept of nation, Sierra pointed out that a nation is actually nothing: "When astronauts went into space they did not see a line between France and Spain. France is not painted pink and Spain blue. They are political constructions, and what's inside a construction? Whatever you want to put there. And in fact the pavilion wasn't empty: there were leftovers there from previous shows. It was an act of respect to the history of the place. But the work was not the empty space but rather the situation."<sup>17</sup>

## REFLECTIONS

In light of this exposition and upon having analyzed the artistic projects of Alýs, Muntadas and Sierra we would

like to conclude this reflection by offering a new cultural concept to clarify the current tendencies toward both globalization and resistance to globalization. In this sense we think we have to get past the "multiculturalism" phase with all of its contradictions and paradoxes and embrace a different political philosophy, "interculturalism," that is to say, an interchange of cultures across national borders, with all that would suppose for a new appropriation of the "national" and its renewed critical contacts with the "international."

The future would be in an "interculturalism"<sup>18</sup> that surpasses the antiquated dichotomy of identity/difference and the dialogues between different national contexts through a greater strengthening of subjectivities, the particular realities of each human being beyond the concept of ethnicity, and a greater dialogue between the universal and the local, understanding by the local (synonym of room or place) more as relational and contextual than scaled or spatial.

In this sense, in which we think that in a world basically dominated by the concepts of inter-culturality (culture), imagination (image, a new concept posed by Appadurai), inter-visibility (the visual), interaction (relationship, collaboration) and interdisciplinarity, it's imperative to rearticulate all of the knowledge (new and inherited) in function of these new societies of knowledge in which the visual, the historic, the technological and the cultural should cohabitate just like the title of one of the Néstor García Canclini's latest books says: from their difference, from their inequality and from their disconnection.<sup>19</sup>

<sup>15</sup> "This idea of modesty is formalizing a position on the periphery of artistic and institutional practices that give preference to works with high production values. Producing a project from scratch with reduced means, from what is available at hand, has become both an aesthetic and a political statement. It matches a desire to show things down, to reinvest the value of the leftover, in a nonmonumental, nondemonstrative way. This trend can be defined as the production of meaning and content from the rear, from a position of a revitalized underground, a position itself outside the mainstream of a normalized network." See Philippe Vergne, "Globalization from the Rear: 'World you care to dance, Mr. Malevich?'," in *How Latitudes Become Forms. Art in a Global Age* (exhibition catalogue), Minneapolis, Walter Art Center, February-May 2003, p. 25.

<sup>16</sup> Teresa Margolles, "Santiago Sierra", in *Bomb*, 86, Winter 2003-2004, p. 62.

<sup>17</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 63.

<sup>18</sup> Rustom Bharucha, "Interculturalism and its Discriminations. Shifting the Agendas of the National, the Multicultural and the Global", in *Third Text*, 46, Spring 1999, pp. 3-23. See also Niko Papastergiadis, "The Limits of Cultural Translation", in Gerardo Mosquera and Jean Fisher (eds.), *Over Here. International Perspectives on Art and Culture*, New York, Cambridge, Mass., and London, The New Museum of Contemporary Art and The MIT Press, 2004, pp. 330-348.

<sup>19</sup> Néstor García Canclini, *Diferentes, desiguales y desconectados. Mapas de la interculturalidad*, Barcelona, Gedisa, 2004.

## LA CRÉATIVITÉ DE LA PHILOSOPHIE

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L'art, est-il le seul domaine de la créativité? Ou bien, la philosophie, comme création des concepts, d'après la définition de Gilles Deleuze, est-elle également une forme de la créativité, une créativité discursive? Est-ce que la philosophie n'est que la réflexion de la présence sensible de l'art et de sa production de la vérité, ou, au contraire, la philosophie est-elle aussi ou même la seule capable de connaître directement la vérité? Depuis Platon, l'essence de la philosophie est transcendante – la pensée de la pensée, et l'art n'est qu'une imitation de la vérité suprême. La critique du platonisme exige qu'on admette l'immanence de la vérité dans l'art, et le seul rôle de la philosophie par rapport à l'art serait l'élaboration de sa vérité. Est-ce que cela veut dire que la philosophie doit décidément renoncer à la recherche de sa propre vision de la vérité pour ne pas être accusée de retomber dans la transcendance?

Dans cette conférence, j'aimerais aborder la question de la créativité en exposant le rapport entre la philosophie et l'art, le statut de la présence artistique et de la représentation philosophique, en cherchant à mettre en évidence le déplacement de la vérité, de la transcendance à l'immanence. Je m'appuierai sur la philosophie française contemporaine, sur la pensée d'Alain Badiou et de Jean-Luc Nancy notamment.

### Comment approcher la philosophie à la créativité sensible de l'art?

Jean-Luc Nancy met au centre de sa philosophie phénoménologique la question de la vérité et du sens. En réfléchissant sur l'art, il se concentre sur l'artiste et sur son rapport à sa propre créativité. Selon Nancy, le sens de l'art n'est que dans la recherche de sa propre vérité. La créativité de l'artiste est intrinsèque à son questionnement sur le sens de l'existence. Par conséquent, l'approche esthétique et l'approche ontologique s'entrelacent dans la philosophie de Nancy. Regardons tout d'abord l'aspect ontologique de sa réflexion sur la vérité et le sens.

Dans son oeuvre *Une pensée finie* (1990), Nancy procède de la philosophie de Martin Heidegger. Il lie la question de la vérité et du sens à la finitude de l'être humain, c'est-à-dire à l'être-pour-la mort. Comme la mort est une énigme,

elle ne nous offre pas de réponse finale. Par conséquent, le sens de la vie ne peut provenir que du manque de sens, de la finitude, définie comme le manque du sens absolu. Il en dérive le sentiment de la liberté comme la possibilité de tous les rapports possibles envers le monde. Ainsi, la liberté est-elle la vérité du sens. Selon Nancy, le sens de la vie n'est que le sens *fini* et non pas le sens *final*. L'existence est à soi-même sa propre essence.

Dans l'oeuvre *Le sens du monde* (1993), Nancy renforce encore sa pensée ontologique, appuyée sur celle de Martin Heidegger, selon laquelle le monde et le sens sont liés réciproquement : le monde est structuré comme le sens, et le sens est structuré comme le monde. Tout commence par la naissance de l'existant où il faut souligner la différence entre la notion du sens et celle de la signification, car le sens précède toute signification, articulée surtout à travers le langage. Le monde a donc du sens avant qu'on lui donne n'importe quelle signification linguistique. Il suffit que le monde existe pour qu'il soit sensé ; il s'en suit, encore une fois, que l'existence a du sens en soi-même. Par conséquent, nulle interprétation ne peut usurper le sens du monde.

En explorant la tradition phénoménologique proprement française, probablement celle de Merleau-Ponty, et à la différence de Heidegger, Nancy fait ressortir le toucher comme le sens principal par lequel l'existant commence à chercher le sens du monde. C'est qu'en arrivant au monde, l'existant touche soi-même et l'autre, et *vice-versa*. La naissance signifie donc le commencement par lequel on se touche avec le monde réciproquement. C'est du toucher que provient le sens de la vie, depuis la naissance jusqu'à la mort.

Le toucher est ainsi une source inépuisable de la pensée ontologique de Nancy, et esthétique aussi. Il essaie d'accentuer par l'esthétique, d'une manière la plus expressive, l'essence *sensible* de l'existant: l'homme crée son propre sens et le sens du monde à travers sa sensibilité. Nancy lie le toucher à l'émotion esthétique, au plaisir et au déplaisir esthétique. En outre, la notion de l'esthétique prend sa source dans l'*aisthesis*, c'est à dire dans la sensibilité. C'est précisément à travers l'esthétique, par la réflexion de la créa-

tivité artistique que Nancy tient à approcher la philosophie à l'immédiateté de l'expérience existentielle. La philosophie ne peut pas être si immédiate que l'art puisque la réflexion est l'essence de la pensée. Nonobstant, la philosophie n'a de sens qu'en réfléchissant l'immédiateté d'une telle expérience existentielle et sensible.

Dans *Le sens du monde*, Nancy définit l'art contemporain comme l'art du fragment. Du point de vue ontologique, tout d'abord, il propose de remplacer le monde « présentable », ou totalisé de sens imposé métaphysiquement ou idéologiquement, par une fragmentation qui s'ouvre à l'événement d'être ou à l'existence. Comment penser l'art dans un monde où la fragmentation serait la présentation la plus pertinente de l'être? Est-il encore l'art? En quel sens, l'art? Est-il nécessaire à la pensée du sens du monde?

Au sens le plus large, le fragment est le plaisir ou la douleur que l'existant sent à travers son existence. Au sens plus étroit, voici la définition de l'art de Nancy : « L'art est fragment parce qu'il touche au plaisir : il fait plaisir, il est fait de ça et pour ça, pour ce plaisir grâce auquel il touche – et ce *toucher* est son essence. »<sup>1</sup> C'est toujours d'une façon unique que l'art touche l'existant. Il s'en suit que la vérité artistique est unique, au sens d'un événement. L'art ne se rapporte donc pas à la vérité comme la philosophie l'aurait voulu : dans un sens final et établi.

La philosophie n'a pas le droit de soumettre l'art à ses propres aspirations : celui-ci « a fini d'être art religieux ou philosophique, tout comme d'être art (théologico-)politique. Du même coup, l'art est ouvert à cette fragmentation de sens que l'existence est. Il y fut toujours ouvert. »<sup>2</sup> Il ne faut donc pas que l'art soit au service de la philosophie : le sens de l'art n'est que dans la manifestation de sa propre vérité. Si l'art est un événement sensible, cela ne veut pas dire qu'il n'est pas la pensée aussi. Bien au contraire, depuis la modernité, l'art est devenu de plus en plus conceptuel. Ce que Nancy voudrait souligner, c'est que l'art ne fut peut-être jamais ou ne sera plus une représentation sensible de l'Idée, comme encore Hegel et même Nietzsche l'avaient exigé.

### Est-ce que l'art a besoin de la philosophie?

La réflexion d'Alain Badiou sur le rapport de l'art et de la philosophie est un point décisif dans la philosophie des dernières années. On va regarder de plus près son *Petit manuel d'inhérence* (1998), surtout le premier chapitre « Art et philosophie ». Il examine leur rapport, ou leur « nouage », du point de vue historique, en s'appuyant sur la notion de vérité comme la catégorie principale de la philosophie. Le nouage de l'art et de la philosophie est pensée sous trois schèmes : didactique (Platon), classique (Aristote) et romantique (Heidegger). La thèse du schème didactique est que l'art est incapable de vérité ; le schème romantique s'y oppose absolument : la thèse en est que l'art seul est capable de vérité. Le dispositif classique, à partir d'Aristote, tient en deux thèses : l'art est incapable de vérité, ce qui n'est pas grave, car l'art ne prétend pas l'être. L'art a une fonction

thérapeutique et éthique et non pas du tout cognitive. L'art doit plaire pour procurer de la *catharsis*, et pour cela il lui suffit d'être vraisemblable.

Le vingtième siècle, dont les dispositions majeures de la pensée philosophique sont pour Badiou au nombre de trois aussi : le marxisme (didacticien), la psychanalyse (classique) et l'herméneutique allemande (romantique), n'a pas réussi à introduire de nouveau schème. En revanche, Badiou va tenter de proposer un quatrième mode de nouage entre la philosophie et l'art qui va se défaire du rapport passé de l'art et de la vérité.

« Les catégories de ce rapport sont l'immanence et la singularité. 'Immanence' renvoie à la question suivante : est-ce que la vérité est réellement intérieure à l'effet artistique des œuvres? Ou bien l'œuvre d'art n'est-elle que l'instrument d'une vérité extérieure? « Singularité » renvoie à une autre question : la vérité dont l'art témoigne lui est-elle absolument propre? ... Dans les schèmes hérités, le rapport des œuvres artistiques à la vérité ne parvient jamais à être simultanément singulier et immanent. On affirmera donc cette simultanéité. Ce qui se dit aussi bien : l'art *lui-même* est une procédure de vérité. ... Et cette pensée, ou les vérités qu'elle active, sont irréductibles aux autres vérités, qu'elles soient scientifiques, politiques ou amoureuses. Ce qui veut dire aussi que l'art, comme pensée singulière, est irréductible à la philosophie. »<sup>3</sup>

L'art n'a donc pas de sens ou de but qui lui serait imposé. En nous approchant d'une création artistique, il ne nous reste qu'à « rencontrer » son existence. Du point de vue de l'immanence et de la singularité de sa vérité, l'art est une pensée, qui est parfaitement capable de réfléchir, seule, sur son essence. Qu'est-ce qui reste alors à la philosophie? Est-ce que l'art n'en a point besoin? Pire encore : N'y a-t-il pas de vérités proprement philosophiques? La réponse de Badiou n'est pas entièrement négative : « La philosophie, ou plutôt une philosophie, est toujours l'élaboration d'une catégorie de vérité. Elle ne produit par elle-même aucune vérité effective. Elle saisit les vérités, les montre, les expose, énonce qu'il y en a. ... Enfin, elle compossibilise des vérités disparates et, de ce fait, énonce ce qu'est ce temps, celui où elle opère, en tant que temps des vérités qui y procèdent. »<sup>4</sup>

La philosophie n'est donc pas la source de vérités, et l'art n'est pas seulement leur présentation sensible. Pourtant, le nouage de l'art et de la philosophie a encore du sens : la philosophie ne peut exister qu'en réfléchissant sur des vérités que procurent des procédures différentes, parmi elles : l'art, et l'art a besoin de la philosophie, du moins de temps en temps, pour qu'elle l'aide à éclaircir son sort. En tout cas, la philosophie n'a plus le droit de déterminer l'essence de l'art.

Si l'art est une production immanente et singulière de vérités : quel en est la définition possible? Selon Badiou, il faut chercher la réponse dans le rapport entre infini et fini : une vérité est une multiplicité infinie, tandis qu'une œuvre d'art est essentiellement finie ; l'art est création de finitude. « Si donc on soutient que l'œuvre est vérité, il

<sup>1</sup> Nancy, Jean-Luc: *Le sens du monde*, Éditions Galilée, Paris 1993, p. 205.

<sup>2</sup> Ibidem, p. 122.

<sup>3</sup> Badiou, Alain: *Petit manuel d'inhérence*, Éditions du Seuil, Paris 1998, p. 20-21.

<sup>4</sup> Ibidem, p. 28-29.

faudra soutenir du même mouvement qu'elle est descente de l'infini-vrai dans la finitude. »<sup>5</sup> Pour ne pas retomber dans le romantisme, Badiou souligne que toute vérité s'origine dans un événement qui s'est passé ou a été inventé dans un temps et dans un lieu.

Il n'est pas possible d'imaginer qu'on puisse inventer – et la vérité est invention -quoi que ce soit au de-là de cette dimension spatiale et temporelle d'un événement. Sinon, on retomberait dans une conceptualisation «géniale» ou idéaliste de l'invention. Pourtant, il est impossible que l'oeuvre d'art soit à la fois une vérité et l'événement qui origine cette vérité. Par conséquent, Badiou propose de distinguer l'oeuvre et l'événement. Une oeuvre n'est qu'un fait de l'art. En plus, une oeuvre ne puise pas toute la vérité. Comme nous le savons déjà, une vérité est une procédure, artistique dans le cas présent, qui est initiée par un événement. « Cette procédure n'est composée que d'oeuvres. Mais elle ne se manifeste – comme infinité – dans aucune. L'oeuvre est donc l'instance locale, le point différentiel d'une vérité. ... Une vérité n'a nul autre être que des oeuvres, elle est un multiple (infini) générique d'oeuvres. Mais ces oeuvres ne tissent l'être d'une vérité artistique que selon le hasard de leurs occurrences successives. »<sup>6</sup>

Une vérité est donc un multiple infini d'oeuvres, tandis qu'une oeuvre est un fragment fini. Une vérité est singulière, alors qu'une oeuvre est particulière. Des oeuvres composent une vérité dans le sens d'une configuration artistique. Bref, une vérité est une configuration artistique, initiée par un événement. Un événement dans l'art est en général un groupe d'oeuvres, un multiple singulier d'oeuvres. La différence entre une vérité comme configuration artistique et un événement est en ceci qu'une configuration artistique n'a pas de contour fini, elle n'est pas seulement un multiple d'oeuvres déjà faites, mais aussi une potentialité d'oeuvres qui, probablement, feront jour dans un avenir indéterminé. (P. ex. : le roman est une configuration artistique pour la prose, ou la tragédie grecque pour le drame, etc.)

Toute oeuvre est donc une recherche de sa propre vérité à l'intérieur d'une configuration artistique, et, *vice-versa*: une configuration se pense elle-même dans les oeuvres qui la composent. L'art est donc capable de réfléchir, seul, à partir de son propre expérience, sur son essence, sur les lois de sa créativité. De ce point de vue, l'art n'a pas besoin de la philosophie. Pourtant, leur collaboration est souvent très féconde. Quel en est, donc, leur sujet? Selon Badiou, il s'agit d'une «coresponsabilité de l'art, qui produit des vérités, et de la philosophie, qui, sous condition qu'il y en ait, a pour devoir, et tâche très difficile, de les montrer. Les montrer veut essentiellement dire: les distinguer de l'opinion.»<sup>7</sup>

Pourquoi est-ce qu'il serait difficile à la philosophie de montrer des vérités que l'art produit? C'est qu'une vérité artistique exprime des idées nouvelles par des formes nouvelles qui ne sont pas encore formalisées entièrement.

Une oeuvre originale est contingence d'une forme nouvelle, s'engendrant dans un événement, qui est en train de se formaliser. Il se peut que même une seule oeuvre particulière, comme événement initial, déclenche une rupture avec une vérité singulière. Alors, il n'est pas facile, dans le cadre d'une énormité d'événements artistiques, d'annoncer et nommer une vérité ou une configuration nouvelle de l'art. Malgré la source contingente et événementielle de l'art, celui-ci est, d'après Badiou, un genre universel qui ne permet pas de classification antérieure quelconque, c'est-à-dire qu'il n'est pas possible de le réduire à un genre qui serait encore plus fondamental et générique que lui.

## La conclusion

La question principale de l'esthétique que se posent Nancy et Badiou est donc celle-ci: de quelle manière l'art et la philosophie pourraient-ils se rencontrer?

Nancy plaide pour le nouage du discours philosophique et du style artistique de l'écriture, conformément à l'intention nystischienne. C'est par cette voie que la philosophie pourrait s'approcher encore plus à la vérité du monde, et l'art, en s'appuyant sur la conceptualisation philosophique, pourrait ainsi encore plus profondément saisir son propre sens. En réfléchissant sur la présence sensible de la vérité dans l'art, la philosophie évite le danger de retomber dans la représentation transcendante. Malgré la conviction que la vérité du monde est une seule et la même pour la philosophie et pour l'art, Nancy ne veut pas en traiter à la façon d'une totalité qui donnerait la réponse finale sur l'essence de la vérité. Nancy affirme, en accord avec son affinité phénoménologique, que l'homme ne produit pas la vérité et que celle-ci s'engendre en rapport avec le monde et entre nous-mêmes.

Selon Badiou, la philosophie ne fait que réfléchir la / les vérités que l'art, lui, peut créer comme une des procédures de vérité(s). Contrairement à Nancy, pour Badiou la vérité du monde n'est pas une seule et la même. Il n'y a pas seulement une vérité, mais des vérités singulières et immuables à leurs procédures (l'art, dans notre cas, mais aussi la science, la politique et l'amour). Si la philosophie ne suivait pas ce chemin, elle pourrait retomber dans le platonisme transcendant.

Nancy et Badiou ont donc peur de la chute platonicienne; pourtant, pour l'éviter, l'un insiste sur une vérité, et l'autre sur leur multiplicité. Ils sont d'ailleurs d'accord qu'il est impossible de fonder la vérité entièrement parce que tout système de pensée s'origine dans ce qui se soustrait au pouvoir totalisant de la vérité. La vérité ne connaît donc pas le sens final, puisque nous ne connaissons pas le sens du sens, ou, simplement, il n'y en a pas.

Comme la philosophie, elle aussi, est une pensée imparfaite et non totale (ou ne devrait plus être totalisante), elle est obligée de renoncer à son désir narcissique de juger l'art et de prescrire ses limites. Nancy et Badiou sont convaincus que la philosophie n'a pas de pouvoir ontologique qui lui permettrait de platoniser l'art.

<sup>5</sup> Ibidem, p. 23.

<sup>6</sup> Ibidem, p. 24-25.

<sup>7</sup> Ibidem, p. 29.

Il serait donc pertinent de demander à l'art de se présenter lui-même. Pourtant, Nancy a très bien souligné que la notion même de l'art, dans son origine grèque et latine, avait été étroitement liée aux concepts philosophiques de la créativité. Dès leurs origines donc, l'art et la philosophie s'entrelacent, ce qui est pour Nancy une raison de plus pour affirmer leur entrelacement stylistique aussi. Badiou est plus prudent sur ce point : il se passe trop souvent qu'une interprétation philosophique déforme une image que l'art se crée de soi-même. En plus, l'art, comme pensée qui est capable de penser ses propres fondements et procédés, ne dépend pas de la philosophie existentiellement.

Le rapport entre l'art et la philosophie est donc semblable à une impasse : il ne suffit pas que la philosophie pense la créativité comme telle, ontologiquement, elle doit se plonger dans l'océan artistique, mais, en même temps, elle est contrainte d'en dire le moins possible.

En dépit de tous les empêchements justifiés qui pèsent sur la philosophie pour ne pas retomber dans le platonisme, on pourrait néanmoins supposer qu'elle est douée de sa propre créativité réflexive, au moins comme création des concepts, d'après la définition deleuzienne de la philosophie. Cette constatation ne change en rien son essence qui est de représenter la présence du monde. On pourrait se poser la question aussi, si ce n'est effectivement que la création artistique qui pourrait nous toucher ? Est-ce qu'un discours philosophique ne pourrait point, jamais, se vanter de cette qualité ? De l'autre côté, on pourrait douter parfois de l'aspect sensible et touchant de l'art contemporain, surtout de l'art conceptuel. On peut supposer donc que parfois une philosophie est plus poétique que l'art et celui-ci plus conceptuel que ne l'est une philosophie.

Pour Nancy et pour Badiou, l'art, lui aussi, est une énigme. Jusqu'où pourrait-on alors parvenir en examinant sa vérité ? On n'est même pas sûr de chercher une seule ou bien une multiplicité de vérités. Badiou affirme qu'il y a des vérités qu'il serait difficile de dégrader au niveau des simulacres. Si l'on insistait même sur un Tout des vérités, c'est-à-dire sur la vérité, on ne pourrait pourtant qu'affirmer des propositions comme : il est vrai qu'il y a des vérités, ou la vérité est la création de ce qui est nouveau, ou bien la vérité est le changement du potentiel au réel. Et, dans certains cas, les vérités sont éternelles et les mêmes pour tout le monde (en mathématiques, p.ex.). Nancy s'approche de Badiou par sa propre voie : la philosophie, l'art, et les autres savoirs, suivent la trace d'une seule vérité qui, pourtant, restera toujours indéterminée à cause du manque de sens transcendant. Par conséquent, toute intentionalité a le germe de la vérité, toute vision est une vérité à l'intérieur d'un certain horizon. Ainsi, Nancy, lui aussi, disperse-t-il la vérité unique, la seule et la même. Chez Nancy la vérité reste plus ou moins indéterminée dans sa détermination, tandis que Badiou préfère suivre le concept de la multiplicité de vérités, en insistant sur le fait que les vérités sont sans fond transcendant, ce qui ne veut pas dire, pourtant, qu'elles sont sans fondement.



# CIRCLE AND CROSS AS MOTIFS IN EARLY DEVICES: HISTORICAL AND ICONOGRAPHIC INTERPRETATION

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## 1. Basis

The article travels back in time to the period of renaissance. It describes special printers' and/ or publishers' signs,<sup>1</sup> from now on referred to as devices. The main subject is a very popular motif in devices used at the end of the 15<sup>th</sup> and at the beginning of the 16<sup>th</sup> century. This is actually an abstract motif compound of a circle and a double cross also called "a double Latin cross on a top of a terrestrial globe"<sup>2</sup>

This abstract motif contains two graphic symbols.<sup>3</sup> Joined together they serve as devices instead of impresses or emblems. It is simplicity of their form that makes these devices with the abstract motif so very different from all the other devices made at the same time.<sup>4</sup>

The research made for this article is based on examples of devices with this abstract motif which were found in books kept in the library of the Franciscan monastery in Novo mesto (further on FSNM). The six devices found in FSNM books were printed between 1504 and 1521. Five of them originate from Italy (Venice, Bologna) and one from France (Lyon). They all have the same motif, the double Latin cross on terrestrial globe but every single motif is distinctly modified. Changes are especially seen in design and composition of the devices. Nevertheless, the motifs here concerned are clearly emphasized enough thus we can talk

about special forms of devices. This arouses the question of accurate iconographic and iconological interpretation.<sup>5</sup>

The basic motif of the double Latin cross on terrestrial globe in the first picture here is made in white lines on a black surface (see picture 1). The circle should be divided in three parts as it was typical in the Middle Ages (it symbolized the known world- Europe, Africa and Asia). Instead it is only divided in two halves. The lower half is white and has a triangle with the black letter G attached at the bottom part. The cross goes through the top of the circle ending as the letter A in the upper half of the circle.<sup>7</sup>

At the second device (see picture 2) the background of the white motif is filled with narrow vertical lines, the result of a woodcut technique. The attention, when looking at the motif, is first drawn by a triangle in the middle of the composition containing the letter B. It is turned downwards and through its angels a circle is added. The letter B has two meanings. It points to the name of the printer that used this device as well as to the place of printing. The cross stands on the upper horizontal line of the triangle.

## 2. Provenance and sacral meaning of the motif

The meaning of the graphic symbol can be found in profane as well as in sacral iconography. The fact is that symbols have many meanings and are very closely connected with cultural surroundings of its usage (Germ, 2001). In connection with this it is necessary to trace the origins of the motif discussed about, namely the place and time of its first appearance.

The literature found in Slovenia mentions Venice as the provenance of the device with the motif of a double Latin

<sup>1</sup> In the early period of print development different functions in print production (printing, publishing, bookselling) were not separated. Mostly the three functions were joined in the work of one person. In other words, printers worked also as publishers and booksellers. There were also some large publishing houses employing smaller printers in this period in leading print centers like Venice.

<sup>2</sup> Numerous examples of devices with this particular motif can be found in catalogues like *Signete: deutsche Drucker- und Verlegerzeichen 1457-1600* (Wendland H., 1984); *Le marche dei tipografi e degli editori italiani del Cinquecento: repertorio di figure, simboli e soggetti e dei relativi motti* (Zappella G., 1998); *Deutsche Buchdrucker-signete des XVI. Jahrhunderts: Geschichte, Sinngehalt und Gestaltung kleiner Kultur-dokumente: mit hundertzvierundvierzig Signetbildern* (Grimm H., 1965); *Printers & publishers' devices in England & Scotland 1485-1640* (MacKerrow R.B., 1949).

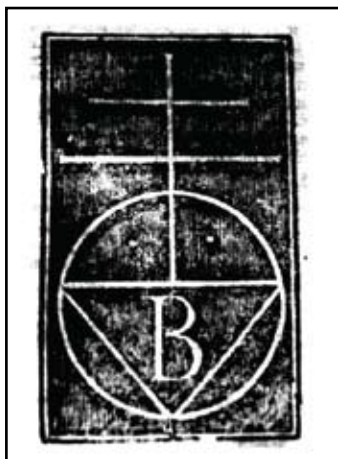
<sup>3</sup> Cross is the most known graphic symbol. It is also the central symbol of Christianity. Circle on the other hand in many cultures symbolizes something perfect. In Christian iconography it is recognized as a symbol of God (Germ, 2001).

<sup>4</sup> In devices from the 15<sup>th</sup> and 16<sup>th</sup> century normally antic themes mixed with sacral and profane ones are used. More about themes and forms of devices see the article "Signeti 16. stoletja: zgodovinski oris ob gradivu iz Františkanskega samostana v Novem mestu" (Jerele I., Golob N., 2006).

<sup>5</sup> It is necessary to define the meaning of the symbol and its cultural background (Germ, 2001).

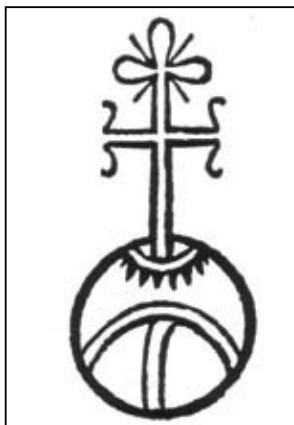
<sup>6</sup> First device is printed in a book with a number FSNM 7199, Č1-a-1. It was used by a printer Giorgio Arrivabene also known as Georgio Mantovano or Parente. The printer worked in Venice between 1502 and 1517. The book from FSNM was printed in the year 1504 (Zappella, 1986; Gallarotti A., 1989; EDIT 16). The second device was used by a printer and publisher Faelli Benedetto from Bologna. He also signed his prints with a name Benedictum Hectoris (EDIT 16). The device seen here was printed on the 13<sup>th</sup> of March in 1521 in the book now kept under the number FSNM 7684, L-c-55.

<sup>7</sup> Letters A and G are used as a monogram of printers name.



Example of Italian device with this motif<sup>8</sup>

*A copy of a reproduction of the first known device with a double Latin cross on the circle*



An example of a French device<sup>14</sup>

cross on a terrestrial globe. In his work *Deutsche Buchdrucker-siggete des XVI. Jahrhunderts* (1965) Grimm inexactly points out that the first device with this motif was printed in Venice by a printer Johann von Cöln on 28 January 1481. This printer allegedly made his device as a copy of an earlier sketch for a water mark.<sup>8</sup> Grimm's catalogue has no reproduction of Von Cöln's device. There are only other examples of devices with this motif printed by German printers.

As analytic research in additional secondary sources has shown later on, there was a printing office using this abstract motif as a device already in the year 1476. The reproduction of this earlier device can be seen in the German catalogue titled *Signete: deutsche Drucker- und Verlegerzeichen 1457-1600* (Wendland, 1984). The device from 1476 was printed in a printing office in Rostock (Germany) which belonged to a community of brethren called *Domus Hortus Viridi* or "House at a Green Garden".

The community of brethren of the "House at a Green Garden" belonged to an order of the "Brethren of Common Life" which was founded in the second half of the 14<sup>th</sup> century by Gerard Groote. This order was especially interested in education. Consequently they needed as many books as possible. They opened a printing office in Rostock. Another important fact is that Groote lived in the Carthusian monastery of Munnikhuizen near Arnheim.<sup>10</sup>

The connection between Groote and his order of "Brethren of Common Life" with the Carthusian monastery mentioned above might provide the origin of the motif of the double Latin cross on a circle. According to the references the Carthusian order has been using the motif of a terrestrial globe with a

cross on top of it in their coat-of-arms for centuries. Under the sign the motto in Latin says: *Stat crux dum volvitur orbis*.<sup>11</sup>

The brethren of the "House at a Green Garden" have probably borrowed the central symbol of the Carthusian coat-of-arms. They changed it somewhat (see picture 3) with decoration. Furthermore the single cross was made into a double one. They have also turned the earth symbol downwards.

Accurate determination of the provenance of the abstract motif the article talks about has given us the possible origin of this motif. But it does not explain the popularity of the same motif among printers from different countries in the forthcoming years.

### 3. The spread of the motif resulting from the spread of printing and its profane meaning

We could suspect that the motif of a double Latin cross on the terrestrial globe came to Italy from Germany by the name of the printer mentioned above who was wrongly assigned the invention of this motif. His name Johann von Cöln suggests he originates from Köln (Germany) but there is no evidence to prove that.<sup>12</sup>

The main fact is that the motif of a double Latin cross on the terrestrial globe became popular only after it had been printed in Italy. It has been estimated that until 1500 already 63 Italian printers had used this motif for their own device (Grimm, 1965; Zappella, 1998; EDIT 16). In the next century until 1600 additional 140 variants of this basic motif occurred in Italy alone (Venice, Torino, Milano, Bologne, Napoli, Rimini, Rome...) (EDIT 16).

<sup>8</sup> There is no evidence of an influence between water marks and devices though there were some examples of water marks containing terrestrial globe with a cross. For further reference see for example Piccard G., *Wasserzeichen Kreuz* (1981).

<sup>9</sup> Device is taken from the Wendlands catalogue (1984, 68). Original device can be found in incunabula *Sermones discipuli de tempore et de sanctis* (Herolt Johann, 1476) kept in The British Library, library of Stockholm RL and in library of Uppsala UB.

<sup>10</sup> An abstract of Gerard Grootes biography is published in *The Catholic Encyclopedia*, Volume VII (1910).

<sup>11</sup> Their coat-of-arms contains a cross (Church, faith) that stands still (is eternal) while the whole world is turning around (changing) (Vallier, 1891). In Slovenia we can see their coat-of-arms on products from the monastery in Pleterje or for example on their web page (Kartuzijani in Kartuzija Pleterje).

<sup>12</sup> In the first period of print development printers travelled a lot from one city to another. They also used different names as it was already pointed out (Steinberg, 1961).

Numerous devices with this motif also occurred in other European countries. It can only be assumed that this motif has spread through Europe together with the spread of printing from Italy.<sup>13</sup> First it arrived to France (Lyon 1483, Paris 1487) and Spain. Then it returned to Germany (1495) and Austria (Vienna 1499/1500) and continued its path further on to England and the Netherlands (Grimm, 1965).

At devices printed in countries other than Italy, the basic motif is mostly included in a composition with other symbols and motifs (see picture 4). Only in few cases the motif stands alone as a graphic symbol independent of all other symbolic connections. On the other hand the modification of a double Latin cross into the bookselling sign (named also Mercury's stick) in the motif is rather common.<sup>15</sup>

The basic motif alongside the bookselling sign combined with the long history and vast geographical spreading point to an entirely new profane meaning while used in print production. It is possible that the motif was accepted in Europe as a common sign for a printing and/or publishing work.<sup>16</sup> Furthermore the large printing families (like the Scotto printing family) used the devices with the motif of the double Latin cross on the terrestrial globe at the same time and together with other devices.<sup>17</sup>

## 4. Conclusions

This iconographic interpretation attempts to show the special meaning the abstract motif of the double Latin cross on the terrestrial globe in the shape of the devices has had in the printing and publishing history. The correct date and provenance of the original motif helped us recognize the sacral origins and the sacral meaning of this motif along with its change into the profane one. This occurred mostly due to the mass production which began in Italy and secondly due to the simple yet nevertheless strong and meaningful subject it contains.

## 5. Literatures:

\* Bernstein, J.A., 2001, *Print Culture and Music in Sixteenth-Century Venice*. Oxford, Oxford University Press.

<sup>13</sup> In the beginning print spread through Europe because of the travelling German printers. But soon after introducing print in Venice the city became the biggest centre of printing in renaissance Europe and it had an enormous influence on print development (Tafari, 1992; *Le civiltà del Libro*, 2000).

<sup>14</sup> The device was used by a Lyon printer Jacobi Francisci de Siuncta Florentini. He has probably come to Lyon from Firenze. In his device the basic motif is put on a shield which is hanging from a tree where the Florentine lily grows. On each side lions are supporting the shield. Instead of the circle he uses the tear shape pointing down. The device was printed in the year 1512 on the last page of a book with a number FSNM 9382, P-f-123.

<sup>15</sup> In the bookselling sign the upper part of the cross is in the shape of the number 4. This sign was used even before the advent of print in Europe as a sign of a workshop and handcraft office. It was usually put on a board in front of the shops (Wendland, 1984; Bernstein, 2001).

<sup>16</sup> The motif is also used in the next centuries. In the year 1678 for example it was used by a printer Johan Baptist Mayr working in Ljubljana (Dular, 2002). Even nowadays the Italian publishing house Leo S. Olshchki uses this motif as their sign.

<sup>17</sup> The Scotto family loved to include the emblems of Venetian republic in their devices. At the same time they also used this quite simple however abstract motif of devices (Henkel, Schöne, 1682; Bernstein, 2001, 41-57).

- \* Dular A., 2002, *Živeti od knjig: zgodovina knjigotrštva na Kranjskem do začetka 19. stoletja*. Ljubljana, Zveza zgodovinskih društev Slovenije (Knjižnica »Kronike«, časopisa za slovensko krajevno zgodovino; zv. 7).
- \* EDIT 16: *The Census of Italian 16th Century Editions*, 1998, Acquired 20-02-2004 from the World wide Web: <http://edit16.iccu.sbn.it/eimain.htm>.
- \* Gallarotti A., 1989. Marche tipografiche ed editoriali del XVI secolo nella Biblioteca del Museo Provinciale. *Annali di stori Isontina*, Gorizia, Societa economia beni culturali Provincia di Gorizia, let. 2, str. 143-160.
- \* Germ T., 2001, *Uvod v ikonografijo*. Ljubljana, Filozofska fakulteta, Oddelek za umetnostno zgodovino.
- \* Grimm H., 1965, *Deutsche Buchdruckersignete des XVI. Jahrhunderts: Geschichte, Sinngehalt und Gestaltung kleiner Kulturdokumente : mit hundertvierundvierzig Signetbildern*, Wiesbaden, Guido Pressler.
- \* Henkel A., Schöne A., 1682, *Emblemata: Handbuch zur Sinnbildkunst des XVI. und XVII. Jahrhunderts*. Stuttgart, J.B. Metzlersche Verlagsbuchhandlung.
- \* Jerele I., Golob N., 2006, Signeti 16. stoletja: zgodovinski oris ob gradivu iz Frančiškanskega samostana v Novem mestu, V: *Knjižnica*, let.50, št.3., Ljubljana, Zveza bibliotekarskih društev Slovenije.
- \* Kartuzijani in Kartuzija Pleterje., Acquired 05-06-06 from the World wide Web: [http://www.kartuzija-pleterje.si/index\\_slo.htm](http://www.kartuzija-pleterje.si/index_slo.htm).
- \* *La civiltà del Libro e la stampa a Venezia: Testi sacri ebraici, cristiani, islamici dal Quattrocento al Settecento*, 2000, Venezia, Fondazione Giorgio Cini, Biblioteca nazionale Marciana.
- \* *Le Marche dei tipografi ed editori italiani del secolo XVI*, 1983, Firenze, Leo S. Olshchki.
- \* MacKerrow R.B., 1949, *Printers & publishers' devices in England & Scotland 1485-1640*, London.
- \* *Opuscula Iosepho Kastelic sexagenario dicata*, 1974, Ljubljana, Narodni muzej.
- \* Piccard G., 1981, *Wasserzeichen Kreuz*, Stuttgart, W. Kohlhammer.
- \* Schrantz B.C., 1910, Gerard Groote. V: *The Catholic Encyclopedia, Volume VII*, New York: Robert Appleton Company.
- \* Steinberg, S.H., 1961, *Five Hundred Years of Printing*, Harmondsworth, Penguin books.
- \* Tafari, M., 1992, *Benetke in renesansa : religija, znanost, arhitektura*, Ljubljana, Krt.
- \* Vagcaro, 1982, *Lemarche dei tipografi ed editori italiani del secolo XVI: nella Biblioteca Angelica di Roma*.
- \* Vallier, G., 1891, *Sigillographie de l'ordre des Chartreux et Numismatique de Saint Bruno*. Montreuil-Sur-Mer.
- \* Wendland H., 1984, *Signete: deutsche Drucker- und Verlegerzeichen 1457-1600*, Hannover, Schölerschen Verlagsanstalt und Druckerei.
- \* Zappella G., 1998, *Le marche dei tipografi e degli editori italiani del Cinquecento : repertorio di figure, simboli e soggetti e dei relativi motti*, Milano, Editrice Bibliografica.

## THE PHILOSOPHY OF LATE ALTHUSSER: ALEATORY MATERIALISM

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The present paper outlines the problematic of the philosophy of late Althusser, namely aleatory materialism, alias the materialism of encounter. In general, many of Althusser's readers understand his later creative period merely as a curiosity and do not take it into serious consideration in comparison with his earlier work, while others understand it as a separate entity, or as a complete break with his previous work. On the contrary, we will focus on the philosophical aspect of his later period and present it as a possible way of understanding his preceding work. It is well known that Althusser in the famous period of self-criticism distanced himself from his earlier work and labelled it "theoreticism". In our view, his late work, the materialism of encounter, puts the theory of the period of his book *For Marx* into a new perspective and proposes some possible solutions to the problem of his so called "theoreticism".

Therefore, we shall show a possible way of reading the continuity between Althusser's earlier work (the period of so called theoreticism) and his later writings from the point of view of the transformation of his comprehension of philosophy.

This kind of conception of the historical line of philosophical materialism was, according to him, secretly present throughout the history of philosophy, which Althusser named the "underground current of the philosophy of encounter". The term aleatory materialism was coined in the last still creative period of Althusser's theoretical life, that is, in the eighties of the last century. In Latin *alea* means chance, hazard, uncertainty, contingency. The materialism of encounter was renamed "aleatory materialism" in the year 1986 and in our opinion it designates a qualitative shift in Althusser's conception of philosophy from his "theoreticist period", where he defined philosophy as "the theory of theoretical practice", to the later period of philosophy as the "class struggle within theory", which one of his famous disciples from the period of his teaching at École Normale Supérieure in Paris, Alain Badiou, characterized as pure "politicism" in his theory. According to him, Althusser's philosophy was "sutured" by politics. What is at stake here is that both of his definitions of philosophy are founded on a very specific and unique conception of *praxis*; nevertheless an important transformation of the concept of

*praxis* takes place simultaneously as does the transformation of his conception of philosophy.

As is well known, Althusser, following the model of Gaston Bachelard, introduced an epistemological break into Marx's science, which he detected in the concrete theoretical work of Marx himself around the year 1845.<sup>1</sup> The break, which was meant to be continuous, had two major roles. The first one was the introduction of a new paradigm in science, and the second one, tightly connected with the first one, was the introduction of a new conception of philosophy, which however did not have anything to do with Marxist philosophy or the philosophy of Marx, but was a philosophy "*For Marx*" (also the title of Althusser's famous book). The expression philosophy "*for Marx*" is tightly connected with Althusser's inquiry into thorough antiessentialism and his claim for the antiteleological in the theory of history, or the understanding of the concrete situation, namely, the capturing of the position within the concrete historical conjuncture. We could say that the epistemological break simultaneously opened up two fields, that is: the science of historical materialism, on one hand, and the philosophy named materialistic dialectics on the other hand. The latter was named the "theory of theoretical practice" or "the science of science".

Not until the epistemological break was introduced into Marx's work did Marx's so called "continent of history" as the first scientific theory of history come into being. É. Balibar wrote: "Althusser explains that Marx 'switched the terrain' by changing his main questions (by posing different kinds of questions which were not only a simple 'inversion' of the previous ones, but represented the true 'emergence'): by the annihilation of the illusory problematic of feuerbachian Man and the Subject of history and by shaping the real determinations of the historical process, he passed from the ideological to the real foundation (the base of the mode of production and the political-ideological superstructure)".<sup>2</sup> We will try to grasp Althusserian materialism, which is also the basis of his early conception of philosophy as a science of science. It is defined

<sup>1</sup> Althusser, L., *Éléments d'autocritique in: Solitude de Machiavel*, PUF, Paris 1998, p. 167.

<sup>2</sup> Balibar, É., *Objet d'Althusser in: Politique et philosophie dans l'oeuvre de Louis Althusser*, PUF (collection "Pratiques théoriques"), Paris 1993, p. 88-89. Translation from French by Katja Kolšek.

by three main determinants: 1. by the thesis of irreversible discontinuity (impossible delimitation) – complete dissymmetry between knowledge and reality (the ultimate criticism of Cartesian dualism), between notion and consciousness, between science and ideology 2. by the primacy of object over knowledge and at the same time the impossibility of differentiating between the real object and the object of knowledge and 3. by *praxis*.

This epistemological break is the denouncement of the guarantee of knowledge. According to Althusser, materialism is only possible in those philosophies which posit their positions right from the outset (materialistic thesis) and assume them as true. By this means they escape the ideological circularity of demonstrating the demarcation between Truth and Error. Reality as the exterior gains an altogether new status, for it exists only from the point of view of the strait immanence of scientific knowledge. The difference between science and ideology is thus asymmetrical. There is no direct translation of one into another.

The continuity of the discontinuity of the epistemological break is thus an irreversible interruption of the umbilical cord between Being and Thought as the univocal dualism or correlativity between the two. Their relation consists of the impenetrable mutual membrane, which is a display of the emergence of the signs of the blind effectiveness of both sides (*effet de connaissance, effet du social*). Althusser's conception of the materialistic dialectic itself at first covered both sides (social formations and theoretical practices), but later on, conjointly with his turning-point in the *Elements of Selfcritique*, a transfer from the emphasis on dialectic to an emphasis on materialism as such took place, and it passed to the other side of the epistemological break, that is, from the science (theory) to the topography as such (social concreteness): "[...] Althusser has always connected the break 'and the topography', but finally their relation in the end dissolved. The dominant subject became subordinate and the other way round."<sup>3</sup> His conception of the theory of theoretical practice lies in his interpretation of the materialistic dialectic.

He put *thesis* or *factum* as an eminent clause of materialism in the scientific theory of knowledge. With the introduction of *thesis* both extremes which originate from the Cartesian dualism, are excluded. On the one hand, empiricism as an abstraction of external reality, and on the other, speculative philosophy, which, according to Althusser "creates its own materiality", so that materiality is understood only as the product or phenomenon of the original interior of the development of the notion. With that an ultimate interruption of the rigorous dichotomy or mutual reflectiveness between the order of Being and the order of Thought, between theory and praxis, takes place, which is also part of Althusser's criticism of Sartre's ideology of consciousness and his conception of ideology as both imaginary and material practice. The merging of both sides of the dichotomy into a mutual plain (level) does not yet imply the total exclusion of science.

With this change we are dealing with the concept of overdetermination, which Althusser took from Freud and introduced into his own work. It is actually a kind of synonym for

the epistemological break. It is all about the theory that a singular historical conjuncture has risen from the core of the ideology. We can infer from that that Althusser's epistemology is already an ontology. From the point of view of the epistemology that leads to the separation between Truth and Error, the true and the untrue (the mistaken), and from the point of view of ontology that implies that there is in fact no empirical reality – Being – which is not mediated via theory (epistemology). With the assertion of the impossibility of defining the ultimate limit between both the aforementioned spheres by introducing this break, a new field of exploring materiality comes into existence, on behalf of which all the illusions regarding the possibility of a direct understanding of "external" reality disappears. Therefore, the epistemological break has the status of "*factum*" or "*thesis*". At this point Althusser follows the example of Spinoza, whom he sees as one of the rare representatives of materialist philosophy, because Spinoza in contrast to Hegel did not start his philosophy with the world or with spirit, but directly with God, which he did not try to prove, but affirmed in advance apodictically as a *factum*. That way Spinoza did not commit the same mistake as his opponents, who were seeking to prove the existence of God and fell into the vicious circle of proving the existence of God. He affirmed his existence in advance, and by that gained the position of the opponents, which he afterwards transformed according to his philosophy, and tried "not only to interpret the world, but also to change it": "Here, I shall defend the *thesis* that, for Spinoza, the object of philosophy is the void. This is a paradoxical thesis, in view of the great many concepts that are worked out in the *Ethics*, the main object of Spinoza's philosophy is the void. Yet one only need notice how Spinoza begins. He confesses in a letter that "some begin with the world and others with the mind of man; I begin with God". The others: first, the Schoolman, who begin with the world, and, from the created world, traces things back to God. The others are also Descartes, who starts with the thinking subject and, by way of the cogito, traces things back to the dubito and God as well. All of them take a path that leads through God. Spinoza shuns these detours and deliberately takes up his position in God. Hence one can say that he occupies, in advance, the common fortress, the ultimate guarantee and last recourse of all his adversaries, by starting with this beyond-which-there-is-nothing, which, because it thus exists in the absolute, in the absence of all relation, is itself nothing. Saying that one 'begins with God', or the Whole, or the unique substance, and making it understood that one 'begins with nothing', is, basically, the same thing: what difference is there between the Whole and nothing? – since nothing exists outside the Whole ... What, for that matter, does Spinoza have to say about God? This is where the strangeness begins."<sup>4</sup>

The introduction of *factum* or *thesis* in his work thus solves two of Althusser's problems at the same time. The first one is a criticism of the teleology of transcendentalism or the dialectic of notion, which shows a *priori* the path of development of the process of the real. On the other hand, however, there is a danger that *factum* itself falls into a pitfall of metaphysical hypostasis in the sense of praising the so-called "accomplished fact" (*fait accompli*). Therefore it is very

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.*, p.106.

<sup>4</sup> Althusser, L., *Philosophy of the Encounter, Later Writings 1978-1987*, ed. François Matheron, Verso, London 2006, p. 176.

important to notice Althusser's emphasis on *factum* as "a fact yet to accomplish" (*fait à accomplir*) as an entirely contingent fact, of which emergence is completely unnecessary and purely contingent. *Factum* is not a transcendental *a priori* condition of possibility, but a material condition of existence. Its contingency is to be understood through two main gaps: firstly, that it is possible not to exist, and secondly, that it is possible to disappear (cease to exist) for ever.

Along with the *factum* of the epistemological break, the so called "recurrent perspective" opens up. That means that we are always already within the field of science, that there is no access to the real object, and that we can refer only to the previous knowledge. The knowledge has no exteriority, it creates its own criteria of comprehension. An immanentism of the Althusserian universum arises, which nevertheless does not imply the renouncement of the possibility of knowledge, but a condition of the possibility of material knowledge. Althusser once took Spinoza to be an example of a philosopher with a true materialistic position, because he affirmed that there is no Truth as such, but only "the true as *index sui*, which by itself shows the untrue." That means that it indicates itself as presence, however as a product in two senses of the word: 1) as a result of the process which discovers it and 2) the proving of itself through the production.<sup>5</sup> It is important that the criteria of delimitating the truth from error becomes immanent to the object of delimitation itself.

Another basic aspect of Althusser's materialism is the problem of the object of knowledge. In the complete immanentism of knowledge there is of course also the question of the existence of the object of knowledge. Althusser strictly differentiates between the real object and object of knowledge. That means that it is not enough to say that matter precedes consciousness, that praxis precedes theory and object precedes subject, because in that way we would still remain caught in Cartesian dualism. Here Althusser simultaneously deals both with the empirical as well as with the speculative positions, which affirm that the starting point of the process of knowledge or the process as such is identified with the real object. From Althusser's strict divide between the real object and the object internal to the thought there follows the concept of knowledge as production in a Marxian sense, where all the moments of the working process have to be of one and the same nature. It thus destroys the hypothesis of the limit between knowledge and the real object. The only way to accomplish the primacy of the real object over knowledge itself in the recurrent perspective and the irreversibility of knowledge is to understand that we have become reconciled to the fact that the knowledge of the object is always already misrecognition.

The dichotomy science/ideology is not an analogy of the difference between the real object and the object of knowledge, quite to the contrary, it is possible only due to their strict separation. The question arises how it is possible to recognize ideology. É. Balibar gives an answer in saying that historical materialism is the only junction point between science and ideology. Ideology is a social instance, and it cannot be reduced to a misrecognition, an epistemological error, or an illusion. It is true that ideology in the concrete historical condi-

tions produces false knowledge, but we could never absolutely define it as one, through the negative relation to knowledge. On the other hand, as Pierre Macherey said, "every science, in the relation it has to the ideology it emerged from, can only be thought of as a 'science of ideology'."<sup>6</sup> The introduction of the epistemological break into Marx's work completely changes the concept of epistemology. "The relationship between science and ideology is by all means a relationship of inequality, heterogeneity, within which the two entities can not connect spontaneously and directly 'act upon' each other without the invention of some third term, which is: the *praxis*."<sup>7</sup> In this way Althusser places the theoretic ideology right at the outset of the process of knowledge as production (*abstractum*) – the basic matter, of which the transformation into knowledge represents the process of knowledge itself.

The last point of the determination of Althusser's early philosophy as epistemological materialism is the theory of theoretical practice as the process without the subject. The epistemological break is as a matter of fact the working of the theoretical practice itself. By taking as a starting point the immanent world, the indiscernability of the object of knowledge and the real object and the world of pre-existent erroneous cognitions, that means that the only way we can obtain knowledge is through practice as a work of the-self-differentiation of science in the pre-existent indiscernible compound of science and ideology. Althusser took Marx's production process as a model. The epistemological break opens the field of the immanence of knowledge as practice, which decomposes the pre-existing evidence of primary ideological abstractions.

The epistemological break makes the emergence of a unified essence of a certain historical conjuncture impossible. There is an impossibility of a *coupe d'essence*, a cutting through of the essence, of which the teleological development would demand only one unified theory of dialectic, Hegel's for example. On account of the epistemological break, Althusser's dialectic is split into two fields, into the field of the dialectic of social formation (historical materialism) and the theory of theoretical practice (dialectical materialism). The period of Althusser's work *Pour Marx* is still bound to the process of the constitution and development of scientific theory. It is marked by his "materialistic turn" of the idealistic (Hegel's) dialectic, using his own words, turning the dialectic from "the head back to its feet". This is Althusser's attempt at a construction of a materialistic dialectic not as a turn but as a break from Hegel's dialectic, which is the main task of Althusser's first conception of philosophy as a theory of theoretical practice. This would appear as the reverse side of the science of historical materialism, which emerged simultaneously with the epistemological break in Marx's work. In his conception of praxis as work (process without the subject), Althusser tries to build a dialectic which would escape the unitarian conception of Hegel's dialectic of the spirit, where all the contradictions have only one and the same origin in the development of the notion, and thus one and the same end, for they are predictable in advance as a teleological development of the spirit (Absolute Idea, Notion). Althusser considers that as a hyposthizing into Being, Origin or End.

<sup>5</sup> Althusser, L., *Sur la philosophie*, Gallimard, coll. "L'Infini", Paris 1994, p. 59.

<sup>6</sup> Cf. Althusser, L. et al., *Lire le Capital*, Maspero, Paris 1965.

<sup>7</sup> Balibar, É., "Le Concept de 'coupure épistémologique' de Gaston Bachelard à Louis Althusser" in: *Ecrits pour Althusser*, Découverte, Paris 1999, p. 39.

In the above cited work, É. Balibar even considers the epistemological break to be the object of Althusser's early philosophy par excellence, moreover, Althusser's early conception of philosophy as theoretical practice does not even have an object, while the object itself is the epistemological break as a void in the instalment of a practice of separating science and ideology. At this point it becomes obvious that Althusser is facing the problem of a kind of double dialectic, as he by means of the epistemological break, on one hand, analyses the scientific method of theoretical practice, while, on the other, through the concept of the over-determination defines the social formation and conjuncture of concrete historical circumstances (ideology).

In the period of Althusser's self-criticism materialism as such becomes a more important issue than dialectic. Althusser's new materialism, which is here at stake, is the materialism of events, practices, and the relations of power. That is the reason why the idea of a 'break' (as a revolution) indisputably still belongs to the dialectical theoretisation, while 'Marxist topography' (and elsewhere 'Freudian topography'), which Althusser incessantly marks as a category, is even the materialist category par excellence.

For the French philosopher Alain Badiou, Althusser's famous so called 'break after the break', or the desepistemologisation of Althusser's philosophy lies in the transformation of the relation of philosophy and science, where it becomes unavoidable that science for philosophy no longer occupies the position of object, but its condition. Thus the question that arises is what the position and role of science is, when it becomes impossible that the famous epistemological break remains included in the philosophical act itself. The very act of Philosophy now becomes an act of the inner delimitation of "The Scientific" from "the Ideological".<sup>8</sup> Althusser's second definition of philosophy as a "class struggle in theory" gives us some answers as to the prevailing reproach of "theoreticism" from his middle period. This second conception of philosophy, which brings into question and emphasises the theme of the class struggle in ideology. Alain Badiou criticised this second definition as mere "politicism". However, we do not think that his new concept of philosophy is an ordinary politicism in theory, but rather that it tries to show the point where as a kind theory it acts in the middle of the field of ideology, and respectively represents a kind of registration of the effects of ideology within the field of theory. He named it *effect-philosophy*.<sup>9</sup> The second conception of the philosophy of Althusser assumes the role of an unusual mediator or limit between the Theoretical and the Ideological. It seems that philosophy plays only one of these roles in the topological structure of the conjuncture, and for which it soon becomes clear that its role is crucial for the non-teleological and aleatory thinking of articulation/disarticulation among the instances, thus the emergence of a non-totalised mutual ground between the Scientific and the Ideological. Therefore, philosophy no longer deports itself in the meta-position any longer. It appears in the guise of a rupture (demarcation), the pure empty gesture (the gesture of void, nothing) in between the two aforementioned instances and as such creates an empty space, upon which the Theoretical

and Ideological can border. In this way philosophy digs a hole into a situation, in the conjuncture, therefore the conjuncture does not become totalised and is viewed as completely non-teleological and aleatory. Philosophy somehow intervenes into and in-between the two. That is the new practice of philosophy, whose object is yet again some kind of void or nothing, which the philosophy hollows out in each particular situation. In this way it enables thinking within the field of ideology. It is all about the question of how philosophy thinks its conditions, however without being sutured to them.

In the eighties Louis Althusser strived to outline the kind of philosophy named aleatory materialism, which is exactly the materialism of a kind of new practice, which Althusser searched for in the dim underground of the magnificent construction of the history of philosophy. In conclusion, we may say that aleatory materialism finally returns to the primary stake of Althusser's first conception of philosophy as an epistemological break, which is in itself an unending task. His conception of philosophy in the last period abandons the attempts to insert the class struggle into his conception of ideology, and tries to build a new conception of the epistemological break, which is constituted as a kind of detector of an underground current of materialistic philosophy which continuously persisted throughout the history of philosophy. It is a kind of historical view which sees the history of established or idealistic philosophy as an attempt to repress the transcendental abyss of the void, which is a basic constituent of all the truly materialistic philosophies and which decomposes all the idealistic conceptions into pure contingencies. This kind of materialism sees philosophical concepts as affirmative nonteleological contingent agglutinations of aleatory elements (Epicurian *climata*) and the analysis of the world as pure facts in the sense of the Heideggerian '*Es gibt*'. This confirms our initial thesis that we should read the Althusserian epistemological break only in connection with his later work, namely, aleatory materialism or the materialism of encounter.

<sup>8</sup> Althusser, L., *Écrits philosophiques et politiques*, Tome 2, Biblio-Essais, LGF - Livre de Poche (21 avril 1999), p. 37.

<sup>9</sup> *Ibid.*

# FUNDAMENTAL PSYCHOANALYTICAL CONCEPTS AND THEIR VISUAL EQUIVALENT: LACAN THROUGH HOLOGRAPHY

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**A**lmost everyone today has a camera and takes snaps. Just as almost everyone has learned to write and produce texts. Anyone who is able to write can also read. But anyone who can take snaps does not necessary have to be able to decode photographs.<sup>1</sup>

## Introduction

If we want to decode photographs we must first understand what photographs are, then how they are created, what their effect is and finally, what language they speak. Knowing answers to these four moments enables decoder an environment in which one can relatively easily and adequately translate photographic code into one's own language, understandable to oneself and people who think similarly.

The reason I dwell on photographic language analysis is quite simple.

**V**isual plays key role in contemporary life. It is essential both regarding perception of the world and (its) creation. It is exactly why one should know how it is structured. Only through such knowledge one can cross the border of only passive everyday reception of visual and analogously passive automatic images creation, we often run into. Only with this knowledge we can make a step further and get from passive to active role.

Why the visual impacts us so strongly? Why do we, willingly or not, follow certain patterns when creating visual representations? What can we do to perceive and create visual world differently?

Answers to these questions require thorough reflection. First one must isolate basic visual building block. This is not too difficult. It is clear each visualia is two folded.<sup>2</sup> On one hand it is clearly an image. Be it a painting, a photograph, mental image or whatever, visual has always some sort of image, representation present. On the other hand each visualia is something non-pictorial, non-imaginable, something we can only place under

descriptive, linguistic label. This other part we can also call the narrative part. Each part has its meaning within a certain narrative. Even more, it can exist only if itself is a part of a story.

Relation between image and narrative in visual is the one which concerns the structure of the visual the most. Only after its unveiling one can do useful things with the structure of the visual. For instance take on visual art criticism, different kind of looking at surrounding world, creation of new visualia, and similar.

**B**ut to understand why the visual effects us or what is its language, which were the initial questions, it is not enough only knowing how visual or photography is structured but also knowing in what condition is current visual (photographic) theory and its application.

**I**n this sense the analysis origins in the work of Roland Barthes. Himself a structuralist but also the man who erected one of the most powerful and influential theories of photography, claimed, that photography as a media is determined mostly by two forms. According to Barthes, photography is always some sort of *analogon*, reflection of reality, and at the same time describes a time, time gone. Thus his forms are: this is it and this was.<sup>3</sup> Beside those, Barthes touches two additional questions. First is the question of meaning of the photograph. In this regard he speaks of three levels: denotative (punctum, informative level), connotative (studium, symbolic level) and obtuse meaning level, where according to him, photography shows a certain surplus of meaning acting as a counterbalance to connotative, notionally very transparent level<sup>4</sup>. Second question concerns photographic referent. Barthes's thesis is that photography is its own referent, its best description<sup>5</sup>.

Barthes's, although very strong and difficult to upgrade theory of photography, has one great disadvantage. It almost entirely obviates the author of the photography. And it is precisely the last 40 years of photographic creation that obviously

<sup>1</sup> Vilém Flusser: *Towards a Philosophy of Photography*; Reaktion books, London 2005, p. 57.

<sup>2</sup> Twofoldness of visions will be discussed almost throughout the whole text. Some things, initially more or less presupposed, will later be substantiated through concrete analysis. Right now it should be sufficient to state that duality of the visual is a thesis which can be found, in various forms, in the works of Maurice Merleau-Ponty, Michel Foucault, Roland Barthes, Jean Baudrillard and others. Shortly, the division is not a new one; if anything is new it is its application on a specific view of photography.

<sup>3</sup> In his works *Camera Lucida, reflections on photography* (1980) and *Elements of Semiology* (1968).

<sup>4</sup> The idea of the third meaning can be found in Barthes's movie scene - photograph analysis: Roland Barthes: *The Responsibility of Forms*; University of California Press 1991.

<sup>5</sup> Despite the fact Barthes is talking about self-referentiality of the haiku he is very close to his theory of photography. In Roland Barthes: *The Empire of Signs*, Hill and Wang, New York 1983.



showed how important if not even controversial is the role of photographic author. Vast group of photographers including renowned artist (Jeff Wall, Cindy Sherman, Gregory Crewdson, Marcos Lopez, Nicole Tran Ba Vang, ...) is doing the so-called directed or narrative photography. They are trying to include authorial, authors stories in photography and thus exceed plain representation of reality Barthes speaks of. As a matter of fact one could say they are constantly on the level of third, obtuse meaning, they are constantly playing with surplus of meaning.

Following mentioned, only partially conscious response to Barthes theory of photography, is the fact contemporary photography and their authors are more or less aware of the constant span between fiction and reality, narrative and the image, which is structurally inherent to photography itself.<sup>6</sup>

Similar issues, close to Barthes's, are discussed by Czech philosopher Vilém Flusser, although on slightly different, more photographically technical way:

»Photographs are ubiquitous: in albums, magazines, books, shop windows, on-bill-boards, carrier bags, cans. What does that signify? Thus far, reflection has suggested the thesis (still to be examined) that these images signify concepts in a program and that they program society to act as tough under a secondary magic spell. However, for people who look at photographs naively the signify something different, i.e. states of things that have been reflected onto surfaces. For these people, photographs represent the world itself. Admittedly, such naïve observers will concede that the states of things are reflected onto surfaces from specific points of view but they don't worry too much about that. Any philosophy of photography will therefore seem to them a complete waste of mental energy.

Such observers tacitly accept that they are looking through the photographs at the world out there and that therefore the photographic universe and the world out there are one and the same (which still amounts to a rudimentary philosophy of photography<sup>7</sup>). But is this the case? The naïve observer sees that in photographic universe one is faced with both black-and-white and coloured states of things. But are there any such black-and white and coloured states in the world out there? As soon as naïve observers ask this question, they are embarking on the very philosophy of photography that they were trying to avoid.

There can not be black-and-white states of things in the world because black-and white cases are borderline, 'ideal cases': black is the total absence of all oscillations contained in light, white the total presence of all the elements of oscillation. 'Black' and 'white' are concepts, e.g. theoretical concepts of optics ...

The disadvantage of such a black-and-white way of looking at the world, of course, would be that this mixture would turn out to be not coloured but grey. Gray is the colour of theory: which shows that one cannot reconstruct the world anymore from a theoretical analysis.

Black-and-white photographs illustrate this fact: They are grey, they are theoretical images ...

Colour photographs are on a higher level of abstraction than black-and-white ones, Black-and-white photographs are more concrete and in this sense true: They reveal their theoretical origin more clearly, and vice versa: The more 'genuine' the colours of the photograph become, the more untruthful they are, the more they conceal their theoretical origin."<sup>8</sup>

Flusser therefore talks, similarly to Barthes and the others, about span between fiction and reality but it is interesting how he emphasizes the fact that colours or their absence is deceiving and that theory, this first-class narrative is concealed in photographs.

Exactly the question of narrative or derived, question of the language of the images, in Flusser's thought is what transfers the focus of the photography from specific, technical image on broader visual and consequently verbal level. All of a sudden photography is not limited to images anymore but can talk to us on different ways, more language based.

We are now closer to the answer why visual works and what is it language. We know visual is divided on image and narrative, we know what photographic theory has to say and what photographic practice. Next step is to look for a general visual theory of the image and see how much linguistic practice there is inside of photography.

Interesting and coherent general philosophical theory of image can be found at Hegel. In his lectures on esthetics he talks about beauty, natural and artistic, and says art with its span between higher causes and frivolity often turns out to be, not a meaning for itself, but as means for something.

»And finally, what concerns the form of this means it will perhaps always remain a bit inadequate; for even if art would truly subject itself to more serious purposes and would produce more serious effects, the means it uses for this purpose is deception. Because beautiful has its life in appearance."<sup>9</sup>

Basically the question of fine arts is concerned which is nothing else but deception hiding in appearance. But Hegel supplements this formulation only a couple of pages later.

»But appearance itself is essential for the essence; the truth would not exist at all if it was not shown if it wouldn't appear, if it wouldn't be for one, both oneself and spirit in general. Therefore the subject of the reproach cannot be appearance in general but only that specific mode of appearance in which art gives reality to what is in itself indeed real."<sup>10</sup>

Hegel, in other words, says it is real the appearance is deceiving but this is the only possible way. Because it is exactly through appearance that things which are not only appearance but truth come to light.

Hegel inserts his thesis also in logical, more ontological framework.

<sup>6</sup> Foundations of such explanation of Barthes's views are found in Jan Babnik: *Priopovedna fotografija (Narrative photography)*, magazine Fotografija, no. 19/20, Ljubljana 2004.

<sup>7</sup> Here Flusser is very close to Barthes's analogon to reality.

<sup>8</sup> Vilém Flusser: *Towards a Philosophy of Photography*; Reaction books, London 2005, pp. 41–42, 44.

<sup>9</sup> G. W. F. Hegel: *Vorlesungen über die Ästhetik* (1835-38), at: <http://www.textlog.de/3422-2.html>, my translation.

<sup>10</sup> Same, <http://www.textlog.de/3422-3.html>.

» Appearance in its essence is not something different to appearance itself, appearance of the essence itself ... essence is its reflection in itself.”<sup>11</sup>

Deception in the sense of reflecting oneself in oneself is perhaps most interestingly presented in *Phenomenology of the Mind*, in metaphysical version. Upon transition between sections on the mind and self-consciousness.

» We see that in the inner being of the sphere of appearance, understanding gets to know in truth nothing else but appearance itself, not, however, appearance in the shape of a play of forces, but that play of forces in its absolutely universal moments and in the process of those moments; in fact, understanding merely experiences itself ... The two extremes, the one that of the pure inner region, the other that of the inner being gazing into this pure inner region, are now merged together; and as they have disappeared qua extremes, the middle term, the mediating agency, qua something other than these extremes, has also vanished. This curtain [of appearance], therefore, hanging before the inner world is withdrawn, and we have here the inner being [the ego] gazing into the inner realm – the vision of the undistinguished selfsame reality, which repels itself from itself, affirms itself as a divided and distinguished inner reality, but as one for which at the same time the two factors have immediately no distinction; what we have here is Self-consciousness.

It is manifest that behind the so-called curtain, which is to hide the inner world, there is nothing to be seen unless we ourselves go behind there, as much in order that we may thereby see, as that there may be something behind there which can be seen. But it is clear at the same time that we cannot without more ado go straightway behind there. For this knowledge of what is the truth of the idea of the realm of appearance and of its inner being, is itself only a result arrived at after a long and devious process, in the course of which the modes of consciousness, “meaning”, “perception”, and “understanding” disappear.”<sup>12</sup>

Hegel comes to similar conclusion as Flusser, images are deceptions, but he adds a vital component, essence of the deception is not only similarity but self-similarity, self-conscious, this is what escapes the mind (intellect). But Flusser also has some things to say about the rules of deception.

» Despite the fact that the camera is based on complex scientific and technical principles, it is a very simple matter to make it function. The camera is a structurally complex, but functionally simple, a plaything. In this respect it is the opposite of chess which is structurally simple, and functionally complex, game...

Anyone who writes has to master the rules of spelling and grammar. Anyone who takes snaps has to adhere to the instructions for use – becoming simpler and simpler – that are programmed to control the output end of the camera. This is democracy in post-industrial society. Therefore people taking snaps are unable to decode photographs: They think photographs are an automatic reflection of the world. This leads to

the paradoxical result that the more people take snaps, the more difficult it becomes to decode photographs: Everyone thinks there is no need to decode photographs, since they know how photographs are made and what they mean ...

Photographs are received as objects without value that everyone can produce and that everyone can do what they like with it. In fact, however, we are manipulated by photographs and programmed to act in a ritual fashion in the service of a feedback mechanism for the benefit of the cameras. Photographs suppress our critical awareness in order to make us forget the mindless absurdity of the process of functionality, and it is only thanks to this suppression that functionality is possible at all. Thus photographs form a magic circle around us in the shape of the photographic universe. What we need is to break this circle.”<sup>13</sup>

Now, when we have also the theory of the image and we saw that all it has to be done is to break the photographic (visual) circle of deception, we have to, in order to answer why visual works or what is its language, see what forms the deception of the visual. Following a saying that log in ones own eye is harder to see than splinter in the eye of the other, we shall move somewhat away from the photography in general and its theory and focus on a concrete example. On one side there we will have holography, borderline photographic procedure, divided from the rest of the photography mostly by the fact, that light, with which it scribes is electronical, therefore by itself, a sort of (artificial) deception, and psychoanalysis, borderline linguistic procedure, sometimes called talking cure, for which the concept of deception is essential.

## Elaboration

Jacques Lacan has dedicated most of his creative effort to elaborating Freud's ideas and their transposition from clinical to speculative, philosophical area. For psychoanalysis in general it can be said that it deals with human beings, more specifically subjects and their relations to the environment, especially others. In order to enable better understanding and interpretation of the just mentioned problematic, psychoanalysis, more specifically its founder Freud, has developed theoretical backbone of the four essential processes of the human cognition which he detected during his work of healing psychic diseases.

He named them: unconscious, repetition, transfer and pulsion (trieb). With these processes, in fact their theoretization, dealt with Lacan in his, perhaps most renowned, seminar XI, entitled: *Four fundamental concepts of psychoanalysis*. Most of the words following will revolve around this seminar.

In addition to analysis of fundamental concepts and their interaction, for which Lacan claimed is essential, he also took time for analysis of the field of the gaze, which is, according to him, most elementary case of subject's encounter with the other.

But, there is a problem. Relation between the gaze and the fundamental concepts of psychoanalysis has never been well explained. Although Lacan, in effort to achieve this, sowed his text with numerous diagrams and topological schemas, these are, much like psychoanalysis itself, complex and hard to understand.

<sup>11</sup> G. W. F. Hegel: *Wissenschaft der Logik*, 2. Teil: *Die subjektive Logik oder Lehre vom Begriff*, <http://gutenberg.spiegel.de/hegel/logik2/toc.htm>, my translation.

<sup>12</sup> G. W. F. Hegel: *Phenomenology of the Mind*, pp. 212-213, available at: <http://www.class.uidaho.edu/mickelsen/texts/Hegel%20Phen/hegel%20phen%20ch%203.htm>

<sup>13</sup> Vilém Flusser: *Towards a Philosophy of Photography*; Reaktion books, London 2005, pp. 57, 59, 64.

This is why I will try, through introduction of theory of holography that in optical sense directly relates to Lacan's formulations, simplify relation between the gaze and four concepts.

Before I start concrete comparison of psychoanalytical concepts and holography some introductory information regarding Lacan's understanding of the gaze have to be made.

Lacan's key thesis concerning the gaze as *objet petit a*<sup>14</sup> is there is always a certain split, a certain schism between the eye and the gaze. This is so, because the gaze always escapes the eye. It escapes, to put it somewhat simplified, because of the difference between the light and the image. Light is what can never be looked into directly. Direct light intrusion can injure our eye. Thus we need, in order to see the image (picture), some sort of a screen. It enables us, due to its non-transparency, to see things in light, as Lacan would put it, to see geometrical optical space with perspective, colours and all the other appurtenances. As defined by Lacan, screen works similarly to shutter blades in photographic camera. Higher the f-stop on the camera's lens, the more obscured our view is, the more we see. Namely the depth of field of our view is increasing.

The screen has, besides obscuring our gaze, another important feature; It can also reflect light, working similarly to mirror. It obscures because it is reflective. Light which reflects from the screen is the light of our gaze, screen returns our gaze, it enables us to see ourselves in the image.

Both effects of the functioning of the screen can be, similarly as screen itself, described with photographing techniques. When we measure the light of an object we want to photograph with a light meter<sup>15</sup> we can choose among two options. We can measure incident light which tells us what settings we should choose to make the object in the picture look accordant with its surroundings, so it will be clearly seen what parts are better lit and what parts worse (on the level of Lacan's interpretation of the gaze we could talk about geometrical image) and reflected light which will tell us what settings should be made in order to make the object be seen in the best possible light. Other elements of the picture will be either underexposed or overexposed.<sup>16</sup> Inside Lacan's reasoning we could say, we will only get the screen or the stain in the picture.

Due to reflectivity of the screen the gaze and indirectly also light enters our eye. Thus Lacan makes two statements. Through the gaze I am being photo-graphed, referring here to the fact light enters the eye from outside, and the gaze is always outside me, referring here to the fact that the gaze is the one who looks at me, since it photo-graphs me, not vice versa. These two statements have huge impact in the field of psychoanalysis for Lacan uses them to implicate the thesis that image in reality is nothing but illusion, that we have eyes in order not to see how (that) other see us, but we will get back to this issue later.

It is time to spend some time on two images, present in this text, I think excellently represent relation of psychoanalysis and holography. First is a reproduction of the painting by Hans



Picture 1: Ambassadors (Hans Holbein)

Holbein *Ambassadors* painted in 1533 (picture 1). Original was created in time, when research of geometrical optics enabled ways of fairly precise determining of correct perspective. Let me only mention the famous Dürer's screen.<sup>17</sup> Due to this research, playing with perspective or the so-called *anamorphoses*, became popular. Lacan ascribes them the point of implementation of the gaze in the image.

We can see two men on Holbein's painting, surrounded by numerous objects that, in the spirit of the time of the painting's origin, symbolized knowledge and art. On the bottom of the painting, beneath the figures and objects a stain can be seen. Distortion to which, at first, no logical form could be ascribed. Only when we look at the stain from the right perspective<sup>18</sup> we see that it is actually a skull painted in a different perspective than the rest of the painting. The need to glance at the painting with the right gaze and see the skull, which by the way alludes on vanity (*vanitatis*) of knowledge and art surrounding the ambassadors is eloquent witness in favor of Lacan's conception of the gaze.

Second image is a diagram of hologram capture procedure (picture 2). It shows how we can achieve the so called interference effect to be written on (photographic) plate by using a laser beam split on object and reference beam; one lits the object and reflects to the plate, the other travels directly to the plate. It is precisely interference which, when hologram is later lit at the angle of the reference beam, enables the viewer to see three-dimensional, spatial images, which have, in opposite to (normal) photographs, the parallax.<sup>19</sup>

Holograms are basically nothing else then images of empty space formerly occupied by the original object, now sur-

<sup>14</sup> In psychoanalysis *objet petit a* represents the instance of the other. In the context of the gaze the subject's relation with the other through the gaze is in question.

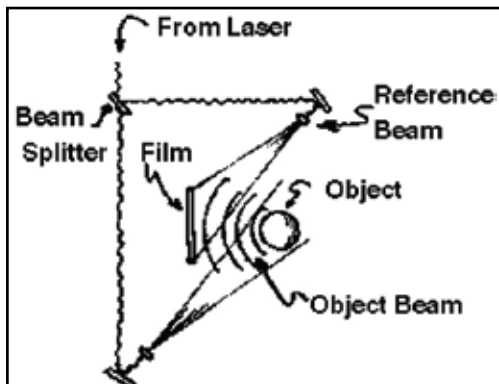
<sup>15</sup> The light meter in question is a hand light meter, the ones that are built in cameras measure, more or less accurately, only light reflected from the object.

<sup>16</sup> In case the elements surrounding the object are equally reflective as object itself, the resulting picture will not be different from that, taken with incident light metering. Such cases are quite rare in practice.

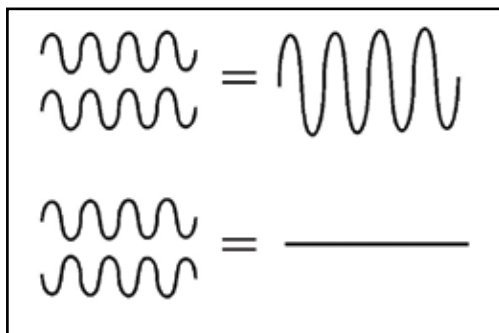
<sup>17</sup> See <http://www.all-art.org/durer/durer5.html> for detailed explanation of Dürer's work and his drawings.

<sup>18</sup> On how the *Ambassadors* should be gazed to see, what the stain represents, Jurgis Baltrušaitis has written in his *Anamorphic Art*, Harry N. Abrams, New York 1983. The painting was situated in a hall with two entrances. Visitors entered through the right one. They could inspect the painting thoroughly. Usually they could see the stain but could not make sense of it. When they were leaving the room, through the doors on the left, they took another glance at the painting. Then, when they turned their head from the left to the right, they could see, what the stain really was.

<sup>19</sup> Parallax is the ability to see around objects.



Picture 2: Hologram capture procedure

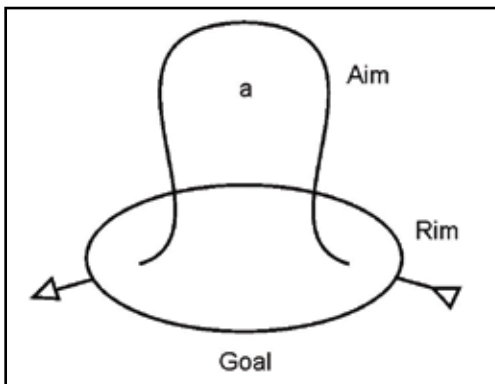


Picture 3: Constructive and destructive interference

rounded by light.<sup>20</sup> Somewhat structuralistic like loss, which in addition of reminding of the vanitas of the Holbein's painting carries also other analogies to which we will return.

We have reached the point when we introduce holography. First we will take a look at analogy between the functioning of the laser and pulsion.

Laser is a device that emits a special kind of light, which in the time of the invention, in the 1960s, enabled tremendous progress in holography.<sup>21</sup> The name laser is an abbreviation for Light Amplification by Stimulated Emission of (electromagnetic) Radiation. Its electronic light is distinguished by three features. The most important one being the fact that laser light is the most **coherent** light we can produce. This means its waving has equal frequency or, with other words, that light waves transmitted by laser of exact same power and follow each other in exact same time intervals. Second key characteristic of laser light is the fact it is in phase. Because of the coherency of the light its waving is symmetrical, implicating that two different wavings, both in phase, can be easily summed. The phenomenon is called **constructive interference** and is the opposite of destructive one, where the two wavings an-



Picture 4: Schema of pulsion

nul each other (see picture 3). Quality hologram recording is possible only when interference between the object and the reference beam is constructive.<sup>22</sup> Third important feature of the laser light is that it is very focused. Photons travel in the same direction in the shape of a beam.

Now, let's include pulsion<sup>23</sup> which in psychoanalysis represents, crudely said, a force through which the effects of the unconscious are shown. Perhaps it would be best to start off by inspecting Lacan's sentence in which the pulsion is explicitly linked to the rest of the fundamental concepts:

**The pulsation of the unconscious is attached to the transfer through the wish.**

Let us take a closer look at the sentence. Pulsation of the unconscious means its effect, a way in which unconscious is manifested. Well, this pulsation attaches to the transfer. Transfer in psychoanalysis is an instance, where the analyst and patient meet. The subject and the other. It can be positive or negative, depending on the harmony of their relation. I should say depending on how harmonious are their desires, since Lacan's sentence interpreted here, says that pulsation attaches to the transfer through the wish. Wish, according to

<sup>22</sup> Interference carries another interesting holographic characteristic. Because the interference pattern between the reference and object beam stored on hologram is coherent and constructive, there is a part of the whole in every part of the hologram. In practice this means that we can cut any hologram in half and still get, when lit, the whole image, only half smaller. Due to this very fact, Karl Pribram developed his thesis about the holographic functioning of the human brain and memory. It is amusing that approximately a century before, following similar experiences, Freud came to its theory of unconscious in which each part also corresponds to the whole. We must not forget Freud started his career as neurologist. In his work in Brücke's laboratory, upon researching the aphasia, he performed a task, one of the last in his neurology days, of classifying results concerning relation between various parts of the brain and their functions. Due to very contrary claims by numerous authors about which part of the brain is meant for what, he came to the conclusion that no individual centers exist in the brain that ought to be related to certain functions, since the brain can perform these functions even when the part of the brain, meant for their control, is missing. This conclusion led him to resolution, vital not only for the elaboration of the idea of the unconscious but also for vastly more general field. Namely Freud made a claim that source of aphasia is not of organic (somatic) nature but of functional, a very radical thesis for his time. A couple of years later, when he was writing his *Three Essays on the Theory of Sexuality* he repeated his claim, he said that problem of neurosis is not bodily disorder but merely over-disfunctionality (cf., Davidson, Arnold Ira: *Emergence of Sexuality*; Harvard University Press, London 2001). Translated into the language of the holography this would mean we are sound, when our psyche is interfunctionally constructive, ill when it is interfunctionally destructive.

<sup>23</sup> Freud called the process Trieb, Lacan pulsion, it is sometimes translated into English as instinct.

<sup>20</sup> The fact, that in laboratory conditions, upon preparation of the hologram capture, one can not tell the difference between the real object and laser holographic image, tells us how illusory can certain images be.

<sup>21</sup> The technique of making holograms was invented 1948 by Hungarian physicist Dennis Gabor who didn't have the light source quality enough at his disposal to create holograms which could match those created after the invention of the laser.

Lacan, is what can never be satisfied. Satisfying one wish gives birth to another. Wish in that respect is constantly sliding, it eludes us. Much like it was the case before, when the gaze was in question. Because satisfaction of the wish is always a failure or at best partial success, the satisfaction must be sought again. Again and again. And here is the place of the fourth of the Lacan's fundamental concepts, repetition.

Pulsion according to Lacan<sup>24</sup> is thus a constant, omnipresent and permanent force which consists, due to the failure of satisfying the wish, of many little repetitions, variations. If we want to present it in optical sense, a diagram is obtained, which is practically identical to the picture of waving. When pulson is lifted of the subject from its source (edge) and surrounds the object (a), it returns (unsatisfied) to its origin. And then once again emerges (see picture 4).<sup>25</sup>

For easier understanding of the said I will describe an example, through which it will be clearer, I hope, how as distinct things as constancy of the pulson and its variation, meaning of the eye-gaze split, function of the screen and operation of the laser light are connected.

Let us imagine a computer or television screen. The image we are looking at appears to be constant, monolith. If we want to see its true nature, therefore the fact the image is constantly refreshing, constantly reloading, we must turn our eyes away from the screen and look past it. Only then we see, in the corner of our eyes, in the area the screen takes place, that the image is actually flickering.<sup>26</sup>

## Conclusion

What has analysis brought us to? How then the visual effects us and what is its language? The answer lays hidden in the sphere of the gaze. It is there where the subject encounters the other; it is there the deception takes place. To understand the mechanism of the deception we must have in mind both Hegel's self-consciousness and Flusser's wish to break the circle of deceit. We can add to them Lacan's answer he gives at the end of his seminar.

“For the subject who is supposed to know, we should suppose, he evaporates precisely in the moment his existence gains the most powerful grounding. If therefore the term liquidation should have any sense, only the liquidation of the deception can be concerned, through which the transfer tries to achieve the unconscious to close. I described the

mechanism of this deception when I linked it to narcissistic relation in which the subject makes itself an object of love. With reference on the one it should love, it tries to lure the Other into some apparent, deceiving relation inside which he tries to convince the other is worthy of its love.

Freud noted natural fulfillment of this relation within the function called identification. Identification concerned here is not ... mirror, direct identification, but its support. It supports and carries perspective the subject chooses in the field of the Other, perspective from which mirror identification can be perceived as satisfactory. The instance of the ideal-self is the point where the subject will see himself, as we say it, as if someone else was looking at him – and this will offer him support in some dual situation, which for him can be satisfied from the viewpoint of love.

Love in essence is, as far as it is a specular apparition, a deception. It invests itself in the field on the referential level established by the one and only signifier, needed for introduction of perspective whose initial point if the gaze is an ideal point, the big I, somewhere in the other, – the point from which the other sees me in form that pleases me.

But inside this very concordance, in which the analysis is brought in by the deceiving face which operates in transfer, we can find something paradoxical – discover the analyst. This discovery can be realized only on some other level, level on which we positioned the relation of the alienation.”<sup>27</sup>

What is Lacan saying? Nothing surprisingly new but nonetheless fascinating. On the point of the self-identification the subject sees (and deceits) himself as the one, who gazes and is gazed at the same time, is thus a subject split simultaneously on itself as subject and object, Hegel would say it is a devious process. And while at it, he discovers the analyst which would in the language of the holography correspond to the reference beam.

Does the subject with this action break the magical photographic circle Flusser mentions? By all means. Visual effects us with its certainty of deception, that we are alone, that we listen to our own language. When we find out we are not alone and there is always the Other present, tough only in our heads,<sup>28</sup> we see we are not bound to plain pulsating, eternal failed encounter with ourselves. Only when we meet the other we get to know ourselves.

But one has to be careful. Once broken circle does not bring freedom from (self)deception. One has to meet the other more often, or as things in holography work: hologram, the whole picture, can be seen only when it is being lit by a reference beam or later on its surrogate.

Only constant (constructive) interference between the analyzed and the analyst, object and reference beam, photography as created and the human being as the photographer, prevents falling back into plain certainty of deception and brings the possibility of progress, development.

<sup>24</sup> Let me note, that although I ascribe most of the psychoanalytical terms to Lacan, these, in similar form, exist already within Freud's own work.

<sup>25</sup> Good interpretation of functioning of the pulson has Alenka Zupancič in one of her articles where she takes on, interesting, linking psychoanalytical concept of pulson with a film by French director Cris Marker entitled *La jétée* (airport platform), which talks about a special time paradox and is half-hour long, sci-fi movie composed solely of photographs. “Lacan positions pulson's circular nature, its reverse movement, its transposition and switch-ability as key or fundamental level of each pulson.” (in Alenka Zupancič: *La jétée ali ljubezen kot pulzija* [La jétée or love as pulson], magazine Problemi 7/8 98, Ljubljana 1998.) Precisely the fact that pulson involves both circularity and waving is similar to the physical interpretation of the pulson, namely pulsation of a pulse laser, which bursts sudden, short but strong emissions of light. Laser light moves, in accordance to quantum laws of physics, as all other electromagnetic waving, concentrically and in wave forms at the same time, is both particle and energy.

<sup>26</sup> All screens flicker. It is true that newer and better, both computer and television screens flicker faster. The oscillation frequency is often so fast our eye does not detect flickering even when we are looking past the screen. But this does not mean, that repetition is absent; only the deception of the gaze is more powerful.

<sup>27</sup> Jacques Lacan: *The Four Fundamental Concepts of Psycho-Analysis*, (Trans. Alan Sheridan), Norton & Co, New York-London 1981, p. 259.

<sup>28</sup> Descartes has concluded his doubt in the other with the thought that as a matter of fact it is not important whether the other exists, it is also not important whether we, ourselves exist, it is important what the awareness of the other brings forth, what kind of split inside a human being.

# MUSIC AND EMOTION: AN EMPIRICAL CRITIQUE OF A KEY ISSUE IN THE PHILOSOPHY OF MUSIC

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## Overview

There is a long tradition of speculative writing on music by aestheticians and musicologists, with notable contributions by Avison (1752), Hanslick (1854), Gurney (1880), Langer (1942) and Meyer (1956), whose ideas are very much alive in the contemporary thought of philosophers of music such as Davies (1994, 2001), Kivy (1989, 1990, 1999), Levinson (1990, 1996) and London (2001-2002). The crux of the debate in these works has been the relationship of *music* and *emotion*, and specifically the issues of *expression* and *induction* of emotion by (instrumental) music. Kivy has addressed these issues influentially, in part by means of his *emotivist* versus *cognitivist* dichotomy. A related topic has been the comparison of “musical emotions” to those that arise in the non-musical “real world.”

The aims of this paper are: (a) to show that the most important claims by the contemporary philosophers of music are empirically testable; (b) to review some of the recent experimental work, including that in the author’s laboratory; and (c) to demonstrate how such methodological and empirical advances can render certain aspects of the philosophical commentary obsolete (including Kivy’s – as it turns out – rather simplistic dichotomy).

The paper concludes with a statement of the attempt to replace the concept of “musical emotions” by those of the empirically measurable responses and states of “thrills/chills,” “being moved” and “aesthetic awe” – with all three of these states being hierarchically arranged components in the Aesthetic Trinity theory (Konečni, 2004a, 2005a).

## Empirical Testability of Claims in the Aesthetics of Music

In papers at three recent aesthetics conferences (Konečni, 2004a, 2004b, 2005b), in Wuhan (China), Rio de Janeiro, and Daugavpils (Latvia), I tried to demonstrate that many claims in (philosophical) aesthetics are empirically verifiable. The assertion was also made that when a philosophical statement permits falsification (e.g., Popper, 1935/1959) by feasible empirical tests, there is little justification for continuing to make the claim – especially in the face of competing cogent claims – without attempting to carry out the empirical work, or, at least, to have a mental readiness to modify the claim when faced with the results of reasonable empirical tests.

Among the various domains of philosophical aesthetics, claims in the domain of music are especially notable for their empirical testability. Perhaps the main reason for this is the formal and highly specialized nature of music theory that does not easily permit nebulousness, politically motivated arbitrariness, and relativistic caprice. Even music criticism is rather technical, so that examples of “destructive deconstruction” (Konečni, 2004a, 2005a) are blissfully rare – limited mostly to the occasional excess regarding, for instance, the patriarchal/male-sexual nature of development in Beethoven’s symphonies or the oppression of women in opera; and while the body of feminist work in these areas is undoubtedly growing (e.g., Clément, 1988; Cusick, 1993; Meredith, 1993-1994; McClary, 1991, 1993, 1994), it is circumscribed. Other artistic and cultural domains are simply more suitable – in part by requiring less technical knowledge – for the purpose of the application of socio-political agendas. By being relatively exact, the language of music generally forces a greater degree of precision in the language about music – and this, in turn, increases the possibility of meaningful empirical tests.

The second reason is the key role that the concept of emotion has rightly had in the writings on the aesthetics of music; and although definitions of emotion have abounded in both philosophy and psychology, the accumulated methodological and measurement advances in experimental psychology have gradually led to a contemporary crystallization of opinion, specifically with regard to a distinction between emotions and, for example, moods, drives, attitudes, and personality dispositions (e.g., Barrett, 2006a, 2006b; Konečni, 1982, 1991, 2003; Scherer & Zentner, 2001). The fact and nature of measurability of emotional experience (as opposed to, for example, an attitude about some emotion-related object) dictate definitional precision. So, unless philosophers of music decide to ignore the recent experimental (including neuro-scientific) work on emotion in psychology – which they can do only at their intellectual peril – they will have to, as a first step, tighten their definitions of emotion. Time has perhaps come to become technical about emotion (instead of inadequately introspective, folksy, or arbitrary).

Most psychologists who work on the relationship between music and emotion (M-E) pay little (e.g., Gabrielsson, 2001-2002; Konečni, 2006; Krumhansl, 1997) or no attention

to philosophers of music, including Kivy. Unfortunately, an examination of Kivy's (1989, 1990, 1999) emotivist-cognitivist dichotomy in the present paper will justify its continuing neglect by the experimentally (and even logically) minded. The attention that Kivy's approach receives here is not due to its objective merit, but to its influence and centrality in the philosophy of music: The present focus is a useful demonstration of whether and how psychological findings may (should?) affect the discourse on M-E in philosophy.

## Psychological Theorizing and Findings Relevant to the Emotivist-Cognitivist Dichotomy

Kivy's view of the emotivist position is that the expression of an emotion by music is essentially nothing but the music's power to induce that emotion in the listener.

Listeners will judge or describe a piece of music as "sad" to the extent that it makes them sad. This implies (a) that music has the ability to induce, directly, an emotion, such as sadness, in listeners, and (b) that listeners are unlikely to judge a composition as expressive of sadness if they experience no emotion. Perhaps the best defense of the emotivist position, which gave a renewed impetus to "arousalism" in the philosophy of music, was provided by Radford (1989, 1991).

The cognitivist position, which Kivy espouses, specifically rejects the emotivist point (a) above on the grounds that the listener's sadness, as one of the "garden-variety" emotions, requires an object that is believed by the listener to fall under the emotion-relevant description – and music does not fulfill this requirement (of course, an off-key singer may cause garden-variety annoyance, but that is not interesting here). With regard to point (b) above, the cognitivist view is that the expression of emotion by music is related to the listeners' recognition of that emotion (without experiencing it). So one could say that both the emotivist and the cognitivist view accept that music may express emotion, and the key difference is one of the form that expression takes, specifically regarding the possibility of induction of emotion.

This writer's view, on the basis of psychological theorizing and experiments, is that both points (a) and (b) above, in the emotivist position, are incorrect, but that the reasons presented for the incorrectness by Kivy are also inadequate: Kivy is right, but arbitrary, regarding (a), and right, but incomplete, regarding (b); in both cases, he is oversimplifying.

## Emotivist Point (a), Regarding Induction of Emotion

Definitions of emotion in experimental psychology are based on a great deal of empirical work and are thus forced to consider many factors that Kivy, for example, in his armchair, has the luxury of ignoring. An example of issues and processes that have emerged from over a 100 years of experimentation can be found in Konečni (2003, p 332):

"Because the primary emotions -- anger, fear, happiness, sadness -- guide and energize behavior in crucial life situations, those with enormous biological consequences, they have been subjected to considerable selective and adaptive evolutionary pressures. Emotions are psychologically, physiologically, and metabolically "expensive" and thus reserved for emergencies; when they do occur, they are major events in human phenomenology. The key attributes of the basic emotions are that

numerous bodily systems are involved, simultaneously and in tandem; that they are acute, occurring in "episodes," with feedback loops; highly pronounced; readily identifiable and reportable by the experimenter; that they flood consciousness and are pan-cultural in terms of experience and expression; and that they have an unambiguous cause/object."

As can be seen, the requirement of emotions having a cause or object (believed to be relevant by the experiencing person) – the requirement that is Kivy's sole criterion for "garden-variety" emotions – is only one in a long integrated list. The items on this list have been explicitly taken into account in several models of emotional states as temporal episodes, one of which is Konečni's (1991; 2006, see Figure 1) Prototypical Emotion-Episode Model (PEEM). In this view, Kivy is correct in rejecting the emotivist point (a), but, since he has a limited factual basis for doing so, the rejection can be considered gratuitous.

In the present view, the emotivist point (a) – to the effect that music can directly induce emotion in listeners – is inaccurate because of the "directly" specification. Very recent research (Konečni, Brown, & Wanic, in press) strongly indicates that the effect of music on emotion occurs, when it does, only because it is *mediated*, for example, by the thoughts, memories, and personal associations of the listener – and even then the emotion, though genuine, is of low intensity (see also Table 1 and Figure 2 in Konečni, 2006).

Although this notion is not entirely new to philosophers, it is not welcome, for different obvious reasons, to either emotivists or cognitivists; however, such an indirect, mediated effect is all that they are likely going to find, if they stick to facts and the empirical literature, with regard to the induction of emotion by music. This is because a number of well-known empirical studies (e.g., Krumhansl, 1997; Nykliček, 1997; Rickard, 2004; Waterman, 1996) that are typically cited by emotivists (or part-time emotivists) in philosophy, and the adherents of the M\*E model in the psychology of music, as supporting their respective points of view, are actually far from convincing when subjected to an appropriate methodological and experimental scrutiny (Konečni, 2006; Konečni, Brown, & Wanic, in press; Konečni, Wanic, & Brown, in press).

## Music-Induced Emotions and Those in the (Non-Music) "Real World"

The emotivist point (a) can be usefully addressed from a somewhat different angle – traditionally interesting to experimental psychologists of music – by comparing directly the emotional states (if any) induced by music to the states resulting from experimental manipulations analogous to the ways in which emotions typically arise in the non-musical "real world." The study by Konečni, Brown, and Wanic (in press) is perhaps the first in the literature to compare the effects of "sad," neutral, and "happy" music on the participants' emotional state to the effects of the same participants' recall of sad, neutral, and happy life-events on their reported emotion, using the same 13-point happy-sad scale. In the case of recall, the participants provided measures of both how they felt at the time the event originally occurred and how they felt in the laboratory having just thought about the event. The music selections were by Albinoni, Respighi, and Vivaldi, with the first and third of these

the same pieces that were used by Krumhansl (1997). For both the "sad" and "happy" tasks, the participants rated their emotional state at the time the (non-musical) real life-event actually occurred as considerably more extreme than both (a) their emotional response to it at the time of recall and (b) their response to the musical stimuli. In addition, even the emotional state experienced in the laboratory after recalling the life-event was significantly more extreme than the one produced by music. In terms of the aforementioned PEEM, there is no doubt that thinking of a real-life event is a far more powerful stimulus than is listening to music of the same valence.

One aspect of this study conceivably provides some support for the emotivist viewpoint: The participants' ratings of their emotional state after listening to music were significantly different from zero (the scale midpoint). Not much should be read into this M<sup>0</sup>E "residual," however, because it can be readily and convincingly explained by methodological, linguistic, and cultural response artifacts (Konečni, 2006) and, more substantively, by the M<sup>0</sup>Assoc<sup>0</sup>E model mentioned above (Konečni, Brown, & Wanic, in press).

### Emotivist Point (b), Regarding Judgment of Expressiveness

Given the suspect status of the direct induction of emotion by music, it follows that the emotivist point (b) – that listeners are unlikely to judge a composition as expressive of an emotion if they do not experience that emotion – is even more dubious. Indeed, there is overwhelming evidence that people can reliably judge the expressiveness of a piece of music, including the emotional "domain" or "label" that a composer or performer wishes to communicate, even though they *feel nothing*. Subjective processes remains at the level of cognition – evaluation, recognition, deliberation, judgment (no matter how fast or unconscious). Kivy's cognitivist rejection of the emotivist point (b) – one could justifiably claim that the latter is a straw position – is therefore obviously correct in terms of the big picture; however, his rejection lacks detail and contextual subtlety that the research literature provides.

Perhaps the most complete recent reviews of the effects of musical structure and performance attributes on the judged expressiveness are by Gabrielsson (2003) and Gabrielsson and Lindström (2001). These authors reviewed studies from the end of the 19th century to the most recent work and considered numerous studies that had used a variety of measurement techniques and involved an examination of the effects of over 20 structural factors both in isolation and in real music. Although Gabrielsson and Lindström (2001) note many methodological problems and gaps in the evidence, there seems to be little doubt – even, to some extent, cross-culturally – that "music can express, depict, and allude to both the differential auditory patterns commonly associated in the abstract with the fundamental emotions, and the specific physical and vocal behavior of a human or animal experiencing and displaying such emotions" (Konečni, Brown, & Wanic, in press, p. 3). Without engaging in additional definitional quibbling with philosophers of music, it can be safely stated that "emotional expression" in music – without induction – is a far more complex issue than either emotivists or cognitivists (including Kivy) have acknowledged, and that it has by now been thoroughly documented by psychological research.

### "Musical Emotions" – Or Aesthetic Awe, Being Moved, Thrills?

Along with recognizing the possibility of M<sup>0</sup>Assoc<sup>0</sup>E, Charles Darwin and some of his contemporaries suggested the idea of music inducing strong emotions but of a kind qualitatively different from the basic emotions – hence "musical emotions." For instance, according to Gurney (1880/1966, p. 120), "[m]usic's... essential effect... [is a] production in us of an emotional excitement of a very intense kind, which yet cannot be defined under any known head of emotion." Recent users of the term have been Kivy (1999), Krumhansl (2002), and Scherer, Zentner, and Schacht (2001-2002).

A century and a quarter after Gurney's (1880/1966) book, the term remains deeply unsatisfying. One can only agree with Zangwill (2004, p. 35) who writes: "Why call it [i.e., musical emotion] an emotion if it does not stand in any of the rational relations that we normally think characterize emotions? We are left with a potentially obscurantist view which speaks of emotion but which is not prepared to pay the price."

The dissatisfaction with the term "musical emotions;" the realization (reached by Plato, Darwin, and Gurney, among others) that music can, at least on rare occasions and in special settings, have profound emotional or quasi-emotional effects that are subjectively different from the experience of the basic emotions; the data from Gabrielsson's (e.g., 2001) Strong-Experiences-with-Music (SEM) approach; the aforementioned findings by Konečni, Brown, and Wanic (in press); and the work of Keltner and Haidt (2003) on awe: All of these considerations have led the author in the formulation of the Aesthetic Trinity theory (Konečni, 2005a), the name of which refers to the related states of aesthetic awe, being moved, and thrills or chills.

### Aesthetic Awe

Aesthetic awe is regarded as the most profound human aesthetic response – to a *sublime stimulus-in-context*. In the present view, the sublime is epitomized by objects of great rarity, exceptional beauty, and physical grandeur (among other features discussed by Konečni, 2005a). The Cheops (or Khufu) pyramid of El Gizeh, Egypt, is the prototypical sublime stimulus to which, under appropriate circumstances, *aesthetic awe* is proposed as the prototypical response. Aesthetic awe may have originated in primeval times in response to natural wonders, which was later extended to colossal human artifacts. It is a mixture of joy and fear, but, somewhat unlike the basic emotions, it can be more easily "switched off" by altering the focus of attention: The sublime does not urgently press, from an existential point of view (Konečni, 2005a). Nevertheless, the perception of existential safety is crucial, especially for the natural sublime.

Being moved and thrills or chills are postulated as always accompanying aesthetic awe, but are far more frequent responses (especially thrills/chills). Aesthetic awe presumably shares with both joy and sadness the state of being moved. The requirement of existential safety differentiates it from fear, but it is on the same continuum: Whereas aesthetic awe shares thrills with joy, they are experienced as chills when there is a modicum of danger (Konečni, 2005a).

Can music induce aesthetic awe? The pinnacles of composed and performed music are often enough called "sublime," but, in the present view, music formally becomes sublime and



may induce aesthetic awe only when it is performed in vast architectural spaces with superb acoustics, which are also of extraordinary beauty (Konečni, 2005a). European mediaeval cathedrals are prototypes and they, surely not coincidentally, are the locations with the longest tradition of performance of Western music of the highest caliber.

## Being Moved Or Touched

Being moved is considered in the aesthetic trinity theory to be a genuine and profound subjective state, measurable by verbal report (Konečni, 2005a), and often accompanied by thrills. It can be induced by structural aspects, plot, and narrative in a variety of art forms, but the being-moved response to "absolute" music may be the most interesting case. Scherer and Zentner (2001) have suggested that being moved or touched is a good descriptor for an intense response to music and, like Konečni (2005a), have pointed out that there are languages that, unlike English and French, possess a substantive form of this term (in Serbian, for example, there are nouns for both the stimulus and response side: *dirljivost* and *dirnutost* or *ganutost*; in German: *Rührung*). It is reasonable to infer that many of Gabrielsson's (2001) SEM-project respondents experienced such a state, sometimes accompanied by a "lump in the throat" or tears (cf. Scherer et al., 2001-2002).

## Thrills Or Chills

This interesting physiological phenomenon has been described as an "archaic response of short duration to aesthetic (and other) stimuli, consisting of pilo-erection on the back of the neck, [and] shivers down the spine that can spread to arms and other parts of the body" (Konečni, 2005a, p. 36). The response can be reported with a high degree of reliability (Konečni, Wanic, & Brown, in press). Since Goldstein's (1980) survey and pharmacological study, there has been a certain amount of laboratory and retrospective work on thrills in response to music (e.g., Blood & Zatorre, 2001; Konečni, Wanic, & Brown, in press; Panksepp, 1995; Rickard, 2004; Sloboda, 1991), as well as to stories, paintings, and architectural objects in combination with music, including instrumental versions of national anthems (Konečni, Wanic, & Brown, in press). However, detailed recent experimental work by Konečni, Wanic, and Brown (in press) demonstrated that although thrills may often serve as the physiological platform for profound aesthetic experience – and frequent as they may be in the lives of many people (Goldstein, 1980; Panksepp, 1995) – they are generally fleeting events and can hardly, in and of themselves, be considered genuine emotional responses.

## Conclusions

The Aesthetic Trinity theory suggests that to be moved, sometimes with a lump in the throat, tears, or thrills, is the most interesting, memorable, and profound music-related subjective state. Being moved is rare and rarer still is the listening environment that can help music be sublime and elevate the response state to aesthetic awe.

The theory employs in a new way some concepts of long standing in philosophical aesthetics (such as the sublime), as well as others (being moved, thrills) to which serious attention is only beginning to be addressed by philosophers of music (e.g., Levinson, 2006, on thrills/chills). By dealing, in a man-

ner that leaves questions open to experimentation, with the set of issues that have been inadequately covered by "musical emotions," and bypassing the emotivist-cognitivist unsatisfactory dichotomy, the Aesthetic Trinity theory can provide a bridge between philosophical and empirical aesthetics – specifically regarding emotion in music.

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## UNLIMITED REALM OF IMAGINATION – FANTASTIC ANIMALS IN ART AND LITERATURE

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### The definition and general characteristics of imagination

In different encyclopaedias imagination is usually described as the power and process of producing mental images and ideas. It enables conscious beings to solve problems (and hence increase their mental abilities) by the use of mental simulation (Kovačev, 1991). The term is used for the process of the mental formation of new images, which have not been previously experienced or have been only partially experienced and later appeared in different combinations. Fairy tales and fiction generally are the result of this process of combination. They invite readers to pretend that they are true by referring to the objects in their minds that do not exist apart from an imaginary world (Bulfinch, 1942).

The fundamental characteristic of imagination is the absence of objective restraints. Therefore imagination implies a certain unreality. Its freedom from objective limitations makes it a source of pleasure and pain (Osborn, 1993).

In general human imagination can be understood as a remarkable mental power, which enables people to visualize new ideas and concepts within their minds, the capability to associate sounds (of a language) or marks on a paper, etc. with things and abstract thoughts and to communicate these ideas to other people across time and place. It is based on the fundamental human abilities and the past mental achievements which have contributed to the knowledge and progress of mankind (Hamilton, 1996). Because of these characteristics imagination gave people power to build upon the ideas of other people and by this to progress and develop other potentials.

Human mind constantly explores the mysteries that surround it and slowly progresses forward into the vast unknown. Its tremendous creative power and its insatiable curiosity have made possible a steady gradual progression of its total knowledge, its penetration in all directions, learning, questioning, discovering the secrets of nature, inventing new technologies and creating new myths and stories that control every aspect of human life. This mental power has allowed mankind to understand the wonders of the universe, to create civilizations, that is to progress on a higher level of individual, social and cognitive development (Kovačev, 1991).

Imagination has provided people with extreme communication power that allows them to interact with each other and to build upon the ideas of the others. Throughout history people have usu-

ally used the knowledge and abilities, acquired by their predecessors, always interacting, innovating and improving the innovations. By such behavioural strategies people have developed the ability to progress through the ages.

As a result of the power of imagination human mind has been transformed into a new, unique entity. Nothing comparable has ever existed on this planet before. The mind's curiosity is insatiable; its ability to create (by which it often rivals nature) is an extension of nature's creative power. Still, it creates particular things that even nature cannot create (Kovačev, 1991).

According to Tim Crow (2002) the "evolutionary jump" – i.e. the transformation of modern humans into imaginative beings – began at around the same time when modern humans evolved a "language gene". This genetic transition might have occurred between 100,000-150,000 years ago. Crow and many other researchers believe that language could have been the catalyst for the break.

### Imagination and cognition

Human mind has taken on a life of its own. The development of modern information technologies enabled the integration of knowledge of many contemporary minds, but also the minds that contributed to the progress of mankind in the past. Hamilton (1996) stresses that the specific abilities of human mind enabled that it has explored almost every nook and cranny around the world, created thousands of languages and alphabets, developed and continually improved different skills and strategies, created and developed thousands of cultures, religions and philosophies. Over the centuries the simple innovations and discoveries have been improved and developed in different areas of the world and at different times.

Since antiquity, the human imagination has been subjected to many empirical beliefs. Some of them were credible, but many of them were not. Nowadays imagination is also under study by cognitive science (Kovačev, 1991; Osborn, 1993).

People rely on the imagination amazingly more than they realize. They use it almost all the time. It is so deeply intertwined with the thinking processes that if separated, people could not think at all (Osborn, 1993). The conscious thinking includes the ability to analyze and during that process imagination plays a very

important role. In fact, imagination is an integral part of analyzing. One cannot effectively analyze without imaginative input because it helps to point out the next logical step. Imagination and analyzing are closely connected (Kovačev, 1991).

**H**uman imagination often influences other mental and physical activities. Its power is particularly obvious in dreams. In other realms it is not so apparent, but in spite of that it is just as active. In almost all human activities, which are characterised by a lack of data, humans use imagination to fill the voids. So it could be concluded that knowledge creates the framework of thought and imagination does the rest (Osborn, 1993).

## Art and imagination

Imagination is closely connected with artistic creation and aesthetic experience. Some authors even denote it as the "missing link" between sensory enjoyment and intellectual understanding (Kovačev, 2002). There certainly exists an important relation between aesthetic experience and the experience of everyday life. The former is an imaginative reconstruction of the latter, which becomes interesting precisely because – however realistic – it is not real.



**M**any artistic works from Greek vases to paintings by Bosch, Goya, and Picasso, from folk art to comic strips, advertising, and Hollywood movies include different fantastic animals, i.e. sphinxes, hydras, chimeras, dragons, unicorns, griffins, sirens, centaurs and many other creatures (Delacampagne and Delacampagne, 2003; White, 1993). Exploring them can visually and intellectually take us to an impressive journey through five thousand years of art, providing the symbolic meanings of such monsters and their association with the unconscious part of human mind (Kovačev, 2005).

**A**ccording to Delacampagne and Delacampagne (2003) in such a "bestiary" we can identify five basic structures (unicorn, human-headed animal, animal-headed human, winged quadruped, and dragon), whose stories have appeared from prehistory to the present day. Their analysis and interpretation can provide a fascinating insight into the processes through which artists have created these astonishing animals and into their transmission from culture to culture. They prove that fantasy enables the creation of the mind's most sophisticated, mysterious, and inspiring works (Lurker, 1991).

## Fantastic animals of Ancient Egypt

Ancient Egyptians had highly developed and productive imagination. Sculptures of gods often consisted of half animal, half human forms, but the Egyptians also created fantastic animals of different sorts. Essentially, they took parts of various animals in order to create a whole not found in nature. Usually, such animals were considered demonic according to our modern concepts, but the Egyptians probably did not make any specific distinctions between demons and gods (Lurker, 1986; Wilkinson, 2003).

**T**he composite animal body was usually only the tentative representation of a divine, supernatural power. The Egyptians seem to have considered these animals to be real, since they were often represented as living in the wild, among antelopes and lions, in the deserts surrounding the Nile River Valley.

**D**uring the Predynastic period, scenes depicting fantastic animals mingling with wild, real world animals were carved on luxury objects, which were most probably of royal origin. These appeared on different ceremonial objects, found in Upper Egypt. Most of these early depictions were of winged, falcon headed griffins, leopards with long, winding necks and other accompanying animals that are usually considered to have been inspired by the models found in Mesopotamia (Gray, 1982).

**L**ater during the Middle Kingdom, these animals were depicted on the walls of tombs belonging to some high officials at Beni Hasan and Bersheh in Middle Egypt. At that time the name of the capital city of the Mier nome, when written in hieroglyphs, had two serpopards back to back and their necks were held by a man.

**F**rom the beginning of Egyptian history, religious significance has been ascribed to hunting beyond the Nile valley. Hunting in the desert became a symbol of subduing and taming the hostile forces that threatened the fertile Nile and thus Egyptian civilization. These fantastic animals became the actors of the protective hunt for the benefit of Egypt (Wallis Budge, 1969). During the Middle Kingdom, composite animals were also illustrated on the so called "magical wands", made from hippopotamus ivory and reworked into simple curved blades.

**I**n ancient Egypt demons were not necessarily evil. Many of them were even very helpful. They frightened any kind of malevolent beings by their strange appearance. Magic wands were frequently offered to women, and particularly to young mothers, in order to protect them and their children against other demons bearing sickness. However, those fantastic animals, found depicted in tombs, probably served a similar purpose of protecting the owners during the afterlife when they had to cross the border zones guarded by dangerous beings.

**A**fter the Middle Kingdom, such animals were more scarcely illustrated. Only the winged griffin appeared in the New Kingdom, during the period when Egypt was in close contact with Near Eastern populations and borrowed some religious features from them (Gray, 1982). During the New Kingdom, griffins were also associated with hunting scenes, but in some cases, they hauled the chariot in which there was a young god, particularly Shed, whose task was to chase and kill dangerous desert animals (Shaw, Nicholson, 1995).

**A**lthough the extensive documentation on Egyptian cultural history does not record fantastic animals in all historical periods, they have probably been present all the time. Their images certainly remained in use during the Roman Empire, which is proved by hieroglyphs, examples of which can be found in the inscriptions on different temples. Fantastic animals continued to be regarded as beneficial powers until the Christian period in the Roman era.

## Dragon - the most popular fantastic animal

Dragon is one of the oldest mythological creatures. It appeared in the traditions of almost all cultures back to the beginning of time. Because of this widespread adoption, the dragon appeared in numerous forms, and local traditions have been created around many of them, ascribing this tribe of monsters many attributes. They had the power to be both, beneficent and

destructive (Biedermann, 1989; Bresniak, 1995; Delacampagne & Delacampagne, 2003).

The dragon's form arose from its particular power to control the waters of the earth. This gave rise to many of the attributes singled out by different peoples as the whole myth developed (Brunel, 1995; Cotterel, 1986, 1989; Jobs, 1962). Dragons were believed to live at the bottom of the sea, where they guarded vast treasure hoards, very frequently of pearls. Rain clouds, thunder and lightning were believed to be the dragon's breath. Besides, dragon was also supposed to have control over the destiny of mankind.

As the dragon myth developed in the Western world, dragons came to represent the chaos of the original matter. The development of man's conscience led to the struggle between dragon and man and the created order constantly challenged dragon's power. This type of dragon was considered by many to be the intermediate stage between a demon and the Devil and as such came into Christian belief.

Contrary to the Eastern world, which regarded the dragon as an essentially benevolent creature, the son of heaven, who controlled the watery elements of the universe (Christie, 1968), the Western type of dragon was completely different. In the West, different forms of dragons appeared. Most often they were supposed to have been created from parts of various animals and they were described as having eagle's feet and wings, lion's forelimbs and head, fish's scales, antelope's horns and a serpentine form of trunk and tail, which occasionally extended to the head (Chevalier, Gheerbrant, 1982; Cooper, 1978).

In parts of Africa where dragon was also regarded as an evil power, the monster was believed to be the result of the unnatural union of an eagle and a she-wolf. The destructive powers of the dragon were supposed to be derived from its fiery breath, which could devastate whole countries. Dragon's eyes that also had that fiery red quality were sometimes believed to reflect the treasures they guarded.

Since dragon was in Western tradition regarded as the natural enemy of man, his death became the ultimate goal of different heroes. Because of that there appeared innumerable descriptions of battles between gods and dragons, saints and dragons, and knights and dragons in different mythologies (MacCulloch, Moore, 1964).

## The dragon as an archetype

The word archetype in this context takes on three meanings. It can be used:

- as a reference to a prototype, or the initial image, which all the various forms of dragons throughout the world were based on;
- in accordance with classical Jungian hypothesis of the primitive mental image, inherited from man's earliest ancestors, which was supposed to be present in the collective unconscious;
- on the basis of the definition, which describes a motif that recurs in art and literature.

## 1. DRAGON AS A PROTOTYPE (A HISTORICAL VIEW)

In defining the archetypal dragon as a prototype, we are faced with the problem of tracing back all the various dragon forms to a

single source. This can be quite difficult considering that many of the myths were formed before writing was developed. Later these myths were associated with legends (Eliade, 1952).

In early Egypt, the dragon was chiefly a representation, albeit with some embellishments, of the snake. Besides, there appeared also some other dragon forms in Egyptian mythology (Lurker, 1986; White, 1993).

The Chinese lung was a benevolent creature (with origins in the Shang and the I'Ching), which was ascribed lizard like qualities before its later association with rain. This connection was established in the second and first millennium BC. Later dragon was ascribed also many other attributes, but this association remained fixed (Eberhard, 1987).

The Babylonians provided a clear picture of a dragon in *the Epic of Creation* from the early second millennium BC. It described the struggle of Apsu (the god of the primordial waters under the earth) and Tiamat (the sea) against their son Ea. Apsu was defeated by Ea who took over his domain and produced a son, the god-hero Marduk. Tiamat created all sorts of dragons in order to have her revenge, but she was defeated in a single combat by Marduk and her body was split to form the earth and the sky (Gray, 1982).

In Babylonian texts dragons were different from snakes and had both, reptilian and mammalian characteristics. The Babylonians presented dragon as a completely fictional creature, without any realistic qualities. He was regarded as an image of chaos and as a guardian. Later the Chinese lungs came to dominate the Near Eastern mythology (Gray, 1982).

In early India, images of dragon were in some ways similar to the Egyptian ones, so dragons were represented as monsters, similar to snakes. Some of them were also represented as crocodiles. In both cases they were identified with animals that existed in nature. Generally it is accepted that the Indian dragon had the background of early snake worship and to lesser extent the crocodile cults, but later it was influenced by the Chinese images (Ions, 1967).

Eurasian dragon images can be traced back to the early dragon forms in Egypt, the Near East, and the Far East. This can also be proved by the etymological explanation of the Greek word drakkon, which meant a large serpent as well as a dragon. The Greeks carried on the idea of the dragon as a guardian serpent (Grant, 1962).

Dragons in the Islamic world were initially astronomical figures, and were linked to the Egyptian myth of Re's voyage through the underworld. Persian mythology presented dragons as evil forces that were usually slain by heroes. This interpretation was under strong influence of the Greek legends that most often also developed the idea of dragons guarding treasure (Viscuna Cifuentes, 1947).

Celtic and Nordic dragons were almost certainly derived from the more ancient myths, though not many similarities among them are obvious. The long-ships used by the Vikings bore dragon heads on their prows and by this strengthened the association of dragons with water. The Celts used dragons as heraldic symbols such as in the story of Hercules, who after triumphing over Ladon

carried the image of the dragon on his shield (Wade, 1998). At that time there appeared many representations of dragons in heraldry and this tradition continued even when the Christian ideals spread all over Europe (Ellis, 1992; Squire, 1975).

Taking much from the Greek and Arabian legends, the Christians were responsible for turning the dragon into the image that nowadays prevails, i.e. the fire breathing monster. They used the image of the serpent or dragon to represent evil forces and frequently even Satan himself (Every, 1987). They drew much from the cultures of the lands they encountered (for example the legend of St George and the dragon was taken from the Near East). The Christian image of the dragon has been set up above all in opposition to the pagan religions, such as snake worship. The snake has been represented as the Devil in the Garden of Eden and the dragon was seen as the incarnation of evil in many horrifying forms. Because of that it had to be conquered by a hero representing the virtues of God.

There appeared another form of dragons in the Americas, which was not under the influence of any other culture. These were the lake spirits of the North American creation myths, and the plumed serpent of Central and South America. The Mayan Kukulkan, later the Aztec Quetzalcoatl, was both good and evil and was thought to rule the four parts of the earth. The greatest god of the Aztecs was Xiuhtecutli, who took on many manifestations, one of which was the fire serpent. Still, there were some parallels between American and Chinese myths (Nicholson, 1967; Séjourné, 1957).

## 2. THE JUNGIAN DRAGON

Jung (1972, 2006) interpreted the archetype as an inner mental image within the collective unconscious that dominated over rational thoughts. The idea of primordial image that influenced consciousness and appeared in different cultures (even if they did not have any intercultural contacts) was based on the conviction that archetypes were common to entire races and epochs. Above all, this was asserted for the most powerful archetypes (such as mother, anima, animus etc.). The image of the archetype was supposed to be in close connection with the ancient myths and symbols (Kovačev, 2006). These were thought to have been created from the collective unconscious with a practical purpose: to explain certain phenomena, which rational thought was not able to explain at that time.

## 3. THE IMAGE OF DRAGON IN ART AND LITERATURE

In all parts of the world there appeared references to dragons in art and literature as far back as the fourth millennium BC. In ancient forms of dragons, which were carved or engraved before the development of writing in the third millennium, there can be seen an apparently unconnected series of images. The early Chinese and inhabitants of Pakistan favoured ornaments decorated with snakes and dragon-like composite beasts. Due to the limited knowledge about these very early stages in civilisation it would be very difficult to draw many conclusions from those artefacts.

When writing was developed, in the third millennium BC, dragon images were more defined. There appeared serpent-like images in Egypt, composite reptile-mammal dragons in Sumeria, crocodile dragons in early India, lizard-like lungs in China, water

spirits in North America and bird-like monsters in South America. There existed little parallels among their physical attributes. Still, all of them were regarded as dragons and played an important role in the contemporary literature (Scruton, 1981; Willis, 1993).

Following on from the early images, we can see the spread of the Chinese lung image over the Eastern world. Similar images appeared from India to Persia. However, although the dragon image spread, the associated meaning did not. The Persian dragons were seen as beasts that guarded hordes of treasure and were slain by heroes, who then inherited the treasure. This image is very close to the Western one. The Greeks took their inspiration from the Egyptian myths, so their dragons were still similar to snakes, but they had multiple heads. Snakes with two heads really occasionally appear in nature, so the early Greeks were probably terrified by them and described them in their legends and epics (Simpson, 1987).

With the spread of Christianity the pagan dragon has been identified with the Devil, a creature that had to be overcome. This was also a frequent motive in art and literature. Christians seem to have taken images from all early civilizations, the snake in the Garden of Eden, the winged devil-headed dragon, etc. In the Old Testament there also appeared the identification of the dragon with water. The horrifying dragon images have already been represented before, but at that time they were very varied. The emphasis was put on the heroes or the saints, who defeated them. Dragons appeared also in alchemical works and as heraldic emblems (Wade, 1998).

Through the depictions of dragons in the works of Titian, Tintoretto, van Haarlem and other eminent artists, the dominance of the four footed, winged serpentine creature settled in Western art. Dragon was most often presented as an evil being, intent on destruction, sitting atop its pile of gold and usually killed by a hero.

## Conclusion

Imagination is one of the main mental abilities. Its power is particularly obvious in the creation of fantastic creatures, among which dragon had a special role in the history of civilisations.

In the past various dragon images (the Egyptian serpent, the Babylonian hybrid, and the Chinese lizard) appeared around the same time, but implied different connotations. There is no evidence that they originated from a single prototype. Considering the dissimilarities between these ancient monsters one must conclude that they arose spontaneously out of the human need to explain various natural phenomena. In Egypt dragon explained night and day, in Babylon it formed a part of the creation, and in China it was used to predict the spring rains (Bresniak, 1988; Chevalier & Gheerbrant, Lurker, 1991; Mercatante, 2001).

Looking at the historical references to dragons, one can see several distinct images. The classical Christian image of the fire breathing winged monster is still present in modern Western imagination, but also some other forms of ancient dragons appear in modern thoughts. Still, the majority of them are more or less suppressed. The power of human rational mind is directed towards the domination over the unconscious images.

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# TERRITORIALIZATION OF ART

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## 1. Introduction

In her book *Terra infirma* Irit Rogoff, introducing Ana Mendieta's death in 1985, said that »both her life and her death have somehow been contained within a very particular geographical location, that of the art world.«<sup>1</sup> The art world is a concept which rings a bell: that of Arthur Danto. But where is, geographically, the art world? Irit Rogoff continues: »While the art world cannot claim for itself a fixed and concrete location, a mapped terrain with distinct boundaries, it is nevertheless a world unto itself, with a distinct cultural and linguistic tradition and a vehement sense of territoriality.«<sup>2</sup> There is a world with its geography mapped in one or another distorted way of projection, and there is a world of art which is neither here nor there, but it still has a vehement sense of territoriality. Two worlds and two mappings. How do they relate to each other? Well, Irit Rogoff believes that there is a set of territorial imperatives at work which »continue to privilege a Eurocentric, urban and commodity-oriented artistic culture whose centre it is claimed is the New York art world.«<sup>3</sup> In the art world, we have a mapping which makes Eurocentric, urban and commodity-oriented art great, while others are diminished if necessary to fit the distorted projection pattern of the art world. And, there is a connection between geography and artography, if I am allowed to use this word for artistic mapping. Art world is not just territorialized and mapped, it is geographized. It knows what it prefers and makes great, and what it marginalizes and makes unimportant, of course. Art world is an opinionated community. And it has a geographical place. Its centre is New York. Famous Danto's »atmosphere« and geographical reality of New York, where he discovered this atmosphere on an exhibition of Andy Warhol, are bound together into a lasting relationship: community of taste and opinion and a community of power as well. New York has it, at least for visual arts. To make it even more complicated, as ancient Rome had its »Atticism« as an inclination for Greek culture valued to be better and higher as its Roman copy, this centre of the art world has a special cultural inclination itself,

that of Eurocentric artistic culture, including preference of its Mediterranean primitive but authentic cradle.. What we have here, in just a few sentences, is:

- that the art world is a location where life- and work-stories of artists are wowed and told;
- that the art world has a geography of its own, and its own mapping therefore;
- that geographical and art world's mapping are connected and interrelated;
- that their interrelation goes in many different ways; one of them is mapping executed by power to decide what is in and what is out, and another one of them deciding which geographical part of the world, with its own art world, may produce the rule for the others.

And, with Ana Mendieta, we have an artist who »not only rejected such centrist organising principles but sought to replace them with alternative geographies...«<sup>4</sup>, so that

- artists can adjust to such geographies, or reject them and construct alternative geographies of their own.

This approach to artistic and cultural geography is different from geographical and geo-anthropological treatment of art and culture in the 19th century, when it developed as one of many scientific project targeting to explain art and culture in convincing natural science manner.

## 2. Art Geography – old and revisited science

Geographical determination of art is not itself a modern concept. We can trace it from antiquity on. What is new is contradicting parallelism of art's modernism's sitelessness/ timelessness, and its presumed dependence on geographical and other natural conditions and environment. What appeared to be handy and sometimes curious explanations (as Winckelmann's idea that Greek sculptures are so beautiful and represent eternal canon because of agreeable climate which enabled people to go around half naked) became scientific principle contested by aestheticism's claim that the essence of art remains untouched by its time and place variations. Art geography was still used to explain differences, but together with a

<sup>1</sup> Irit Rogoff, *Terra Infirma. Geography's visual culture*, London and New York, Routledge 200, p. 122.

<sup>2</sup> *ibid.*, p. 122.

<sup>3</sup> *ibid.*, p. 122.

<sup>4</sup> *ibid.*, p. 122.

scale which put these differences at a time and space ladder of lesser and greater civilisations and of more primitive or more advanced cultures. Thus, geography of art included nationalism, racism, and spatial organisation of art according to the model of centre – periphery relations, where centre was always a stronger and better civilisation together with its art, while periphery was dependent on centre's creativity because it had not enough creative power. Even in art, this is not just »ideology«, as a bunch of ideas which we could get rid of just by the will for change of our ideas. These relationships depend on military and economic, political and cultural power, and they get materialised in works of art as well as in other domains. For instance, amphitheatres all around the Mediterranean speak of a common passion for cruel games, and of »global culture« of that epoch, but what they represented was the power of the empire, the dominant culture, and universal mission of Rome to maintain stability in the Mediterranean.

The concept of human geography (Anthropogeographie, la géographie humaine) developed as science in the second half of the 19th century. Geography of art (Kunstgeographie) which borrowed some of its fundamental concepts and methods from human geography, mapped art according to physical/natural, cultural, national and racial fundament. Human geography was especially popular in Germany where Friedrich Ratzel accepted presumably improved Darwinism developed by Moritz Wagner, understood as survival of the fittest in struggle for existence according to his principle of necessary space for development and survival of the species, and consequential fight for space of survival going on under certain geographical conditions which influence basic movements of human communities towards their segregation or isolation.<sup>5</sup> That struggle for space embodied in migrations and consequently secessions and isolations of groups became so important in the century of nationalism and imperialism is not surprising, as it is not surprising that another response to Darwinism went in direction of eugenics and racism. Friedrich Ratzel, who used Moritz Wagner's concepts to explain art's geographical relations, invented later so popular and ominous concept of *Lebensraum* – life space<sup>6</sup>. This included the concept of colonisation as a natural concept including plants, animals and humans, with famous »Kampf um Raum« - struggle for space, and borderspace – »der Grenzraum«.<sup>7</sup> With struggle for space, he said, there is always an opposition between inside and outside, between kernel of the territory and edge- or border territories. These moves echoed in all art geography which used *Blut und Boden*, ethnic origin and its soil as determinants

of artistic cartography. Finally and for obvious reasons, it became very popular among Nazi ideologues, and therefore went out of fashion after the Second World War<sup>8</sup> together with eugenics, genetic theories of ethnic origins and functionality. Now, we witness a revival of art geography, this time in relation to globalisation processes, post-colonial conditions and neo-imperial tendencies. This relativity includes concepts which were born from cultural turn of the 1960s, and criticism of globalisation which takes a position of margin, edge, border and other limitations as art's and art theory's perspective, contrary to previous wave of art geography which was solidly rooted in the centre.<sup>9</sup>

It is not just art geography's revival; many positivist, evolutionary and Darwinian or Darwinist concepts are used in art theories and aesthetics again, as in Darwinian aesthetics, evolutionary psychology of art, cognitive aesthetics and other attempts to find, after modernist purity and post-modernist relativity, more solid ground for aesthetics discourse on art in at least some natural fundamentals of human artistic drive. This second scientification and naturalisation of aesthetics, after the first wave of 18th and 19th century, accepts many sophistications and critical concepts of modern and post-modern aesthetics and other human sciences, but at its core is a move from contemporary artworld to its biological, genetic, evolutionary, psychological and other origins of pre-historic pre-human starting point of *Homo sapiens*<sup>10</sup>. In this context, art geography's revival does not belong to the same direction »back to pre-historical essentials«. It maps art on physical, conceptual and virtual territories of the artworld and its relations with other contemporary worlds, especially that of geo-politics.

Curiously, as much as I know, there is no revival of positivism similar to that of Hippolyte Taine, who put together nature and culture in his own way, in spirit of the time as all the others already mentioned, and many others of that period. Everybody knows the famous Hippolyte Taine's positive philosophy of art, but it is rarely treated with respect. The idea to examine art according to principles of natural science was very popular during 18th and 19th century. After that, it disappeared from the horizons of philosophy and aesthetics. That art was one of the rare objects of philosophy which was not totally and persuasively taken over by science has something to do with this near-to-total disappearance. Taine's initial move was to shift attention from aesthetics to biology, and then return to art again, changing the usual lofty attitude of aesthetics into more down-to-earth research. The positive, which means scientifically articulated and objectified problem of art had to

<sup>5</sup> Moritz Wagner, *De la formation des espèces par la ségrégation*, Octave Dion, Paris 1882 (Bibliothèque biologique internationale IX); Moritz Wagner, *The Darwinian Theory and the Law of the Migration of Organisms*, Edward Satnford, London 1873: »The migration of organisms and their colonization are, according to my conviction, a necessary condition of natural selection... Since the commencement of civilization the migration of animals and plants, and with it the capability of variation and development by natural selection, has become more and more limited; in fact, it must at last entirely cease and give place to artificial selection. This necessary inference – which may serve to quiet many a systematic and zealous collectors of species – gives to the law of migration a far greater importance than would otherwise be the case. Its application, especially to the development of the human race from the earliest ages of civilization, is certainly capable of much greater amplifications than is aimed at in this treatise. This I purpose reserving for a further work.« (p. 5)

<sup>6</sup> Friedrich Ratzel: »Das Lebensraum. Eine biogeographische Studie«, *Festgaben für Albert Schaffle*, Verlag der Laupp'schen Buchhandlung, Tübingen 1901.

<sup>7</sup> »Beim Kampf um Raum entsteht immer ein Gegensatz zwischen innen und aussen, zwischen dem Kern des Gebietes und den Rand- oder Grenzgebieten.« (Friedrich Ratzel, *Lc.*, p. 165)

<sup>8</sup> Not without a finale: Ervin Panofsky and Nikolaus Pevsner had after the war a debate on »Englishness of the English art«, which was also a topic of Dagobert Frey's pre-war book, and is connecting art geography with Hippolyte Taine's opus as well.

<sup>9</sup> At 30th International Congress of Art History in London in the year 2000, there was a session on »Time and Place, the Geohistory of Art«, later published under the same title (Ed. by Thomas DaCosta Kaufmann and Elisabeth Pilioud, published by Archgate in 2005).

<sup>10</sup> In all social sciences, including sociology, there are similar attempts. Compare, for instance, Dirk Richter's review of sociobiology »Der Scheitern der Biologisierung der Soziologie. Zum Stand der Diskussion um die Soziologie und andere evolutionstheoretische Ansätze«, *Kölnner Zeitschrift für Soziologie und Sozialpsychologie*, Vol. 57, No.3 (September 2005), pp. 523-542; for theories of ethnicity, see J. Phillippe Rushton: »Ethnic nationalism, evolutionary psychology and Genetic Similarity Theory«, *Nationism and Nationalism*, Vol. 11, No. 1 (October 2005), pp. 489-507.



be explained in terms of biology of his times. What biology had to solve without use of any meta-physical or theological causes already from Linné on was the existing and past abundance and great variety of species, secret of their origin, reason for existence of species and reason for their disappearance and death. Such abundance and variety somehow contradicted rational structure of the universe, which was suggested by Leibniz's idea of ours as the best of all possible worlds. Variations of nature and culture were discovered, exhibited and popularised in imperialist colonial culture, which included the international or universal exhibitions and fairs. Great diversity entertained the masses and elites alike, but called at the same time for some kind of order and understanding. The way to achieve such order proceeded through analysis, examinations of similarities and differences, and arrived at determination of common features which enabled final unification of the whole system. Following these and other scientific procedures, we should arrive to consistent understanding, and determine the essence of art common to humanity as whole. This scientific drive in the field of culture, arts and language in search of universal culture, art and language, was one of France's ambitions. France was competing with England all the way through modern age, and built its prestige over English pragmatism and industrial power on presumably greater French cultural and artistic abilities. In art and aesthetics, there was quite a quest for universal artistic essence of humanity, including visual arts exhibitions which became part of universal international industrial exhibitions from Paris exhibition of 1855 on, thus changing the concept which was introduced in London exhibition of 1851. Taine is well known also for his differentiation between South (Italian) and North cultural and artistic character in renaissance.

His »*moment, milieu, race*« arsenal of positive explanations of art's varieties and differences is one of best known, much (ab)used and attacked sites of philosophy of art. In context of his own historical moment, cultural environment and national particularism, the problem to be solved was: »If art is something universal for human species, and something autonomous from all its other manifestations, and something of an eternal value, how come that works of art from different times, different territories and different people are of so diverse kind that it is sometimes hard to assert that art is a consistent and definable phenomenon of human culture?« Taine and the others did not look for answers in direction of historical and cultural change of the concept, institution and social function of art. What they had in mind was to overcome all differences and arrive at a unitarian concept. Not all of those who researched differences to find universality of art were inclined to present contemporary national art of their own country as the highest achievement on the path towards universality, but mostly they did, and even when they did not, what they introduced as universal was inevitably white, masculine, Christian and European. Territorialization of art was used as a necessary part of scientific explanation of its cultural variations and differences, and as a background for emergence of its »highest«, autonomous and aestheticized appearance in Western modernity. There is a constant counterdiction in these approaches which, on the abstract level, bring together belief in possibility to explain art scientifically, i.e. like in natural sciences, and belief that art is itself part of the progress of humanity. On one side, they claim that art has its own laws

of appearance according to differentiations of environment (natural and cultural), race, and historical moment. On the other side, using these same parameters, such theories put different kinds of art together in such a way that the dominating position of European art is proved and approved; within national art histories, even, it offers a way to promote national art as the highest necessary link between European or Western art and its perfect aesthetic purity. This time, it is not the contradictoriness or even absurdity of belief in European or Western dominance in art that I would like to turn attention to. I would like to turn attention that such belief necessarily involves territorialisation of art so that it needs at the same time a theory of art's purity which emerges from philosophical aesthetics, and a theory of natural, environmental and racial background which makes the domination indisputable, as a result of uncontrollable objective natural forces. This is not something that endangers territorialization of art, it is its very core and reason for existence: all territorializations of art in aesthetics, philosophy of art, and art history, were developed for that reason to make hierarchical relations between territorially dependent artistic phenomena visible and natural.

### 3. The Invention of the Mediterranean

Only after this introduction on geographies and artistic geographies, we dare ask: what about Mediterranean as a location, and its relations with the art world? and is Mediterranean a place with a name in the art world as well? if yes, what kind of distortions and biases go on here?

When the earth was flat, Mediterranean was the centre of the earth, and Rome was the centre of the Mediterranean. Then, with Christianity, there was a split and division into two Romes, the old one and the new one, and consequently division of the Mediterranean, later confirmed and strengthened by the presence of non-Christian empires of Arabs and Turks. Both new centers lost their central position afterwards, one to the European West and North, another to Moscow as the proverbial third Rome. When earth became a ball, and when this globe was explored from one side to the other, especially with oriental trade re-directed around Africa in the 15th century, the Mediterranean lost its central place in trade and economy. It was not pushed on the margin of the world, but it was definitely on the borders, while the centre of order and power lied somewhere else. Its division was stabilised in dichotomy between Christianity and Islam, between enlightened civilisation and its orientalism, and, of course, as colonial power and its colonies. Modernisation process of the Mediterranean produced nation states of different political, economic and cultural weight, more or less distributed on the axis between the European Union South which plays the role of North in the Mediterranean, and Mediterranean South.

When aestheticians of the Mediterranean decided, thanks to our Greek colleagues, especially to Prof. Zivas, to meet in Mediterranean context, it was not a decision to meet in the centre of power, or where at least cultural capital still influences the whole world. It was a decision to put together again, if only in aesthetics, a place which is on the borders of the European Union, a lesser global empire, and is deeply divided and breached in many directions, by geopolitical and/or symbolic order. In art and culture, with long history of communications and mutual (re)production of common hybridities across the

divide, this situation is not new. What is new are the rules of global capitalism and of the European Union with their asymmetric post-colonial distribution of sovereignty, hegemony, and cultural capital.

In such a context, of course, Mediterranean as a place of lost greatness which became part of progressive history as its everlasting starting point and point of new departures in different kinds of crisis could be the place where we meet. If that is so, we very probably meet because another crisis of civilisation might be helped with renewed attachment to the original and the authentic. Marino Niola has a characterisation of this modern myth of the Mediterranean, originating from the 18th century: »So the South became a metaphor for a temporal threshold of a mythical past that preceded the time when history changed gears and archaeology became the material and symbolic vehicle for this 'invention of the Mediterranean'.«<sup>11</sup>

We could also meet in the Mediterranean because this place is a place of eternal beauty. Mediterranean can be so beautiful in art, and so recognisable, with its colours and olive orchards, with blue sea and white sailing boats, with terraces and red soil, wine in glasses and fish on the table, white houses and salinas, and breath-taking air's quivering in summer heat. That is natural culture of the Mediterranean.

And there is another geopolitical artistic image of Mediterranean, that of divide, borders, margins and cleavages, including wired fences, anti-trespassing walls and interception corridors, »no-man's« lands, territories of exception, invisible black holes and transitional territories. This kind of art is more inclined towards performance, installations, video art, mediated production, internet art and all other ways of distributing image and message to broader publics without traditional institutional framework. Their place of inclusion is quite often broader civil initiative, movement or group, organised as NGO or as an artistic collective, which in this case represents alternative institutionalisation, instead of exclusively artistic one. If modernism offers an idea of »art without borders«, while it strictly develops nation-states and national arts, this kind of art is literally art on the border itself.

There is a lot of art in Mediterranean, of course, but it seems that these three are the most visible Mediterranean kinds of art. It seems as if the first two are more or less apolitical, and the third one is extremely politicised. But this kind of statements imply that the political is something alien and external to art, which belongs to its own secluded and autonomous territory. Which, quite the contrary, it is not, and the Mediterranean is not an exception. To explain what I have in mind, we have to visit politics in the Mediterranean.

Think first just about Your journeys here to Slovenia to attend this congress. On one side, we have those coming from the European Union countries. They do not even need passports. On other other side of Mediterranean, things are considerably different. You have to obtain a visa. There is a visa for Slovenia which is still not part of Schengen area, which means that with Slovenian visa You can enter Slovenia only, but not the Schengen area of the EU. If You want to enter Schengen area, You need another kind of visa, and it depends on Your residential state and on Your citizenship, which kind of visa

You may apply for. In this procedure, You meet with considerable scrutiny and precise means of control, especially if You are coming from an Arab country of the Mediterranean South. It seems so natural, perhaps, that it is so, but it was not like that fifteen or twenty years ago when movements were much less controlled, and it was easier to come and to leave as it is now. And, what I already mentioned as asymmetric relations between the EU and the Mediterranean South, is now part of visa politics as well. For me or any other EU citizen, the formal procedure to enter any state on the South of Mediterranean is much easier than for its citizens to get permit to visit Slovenia. If I want to go there, I am treated as a tourist until proven differently. If they want to come here, they are treated as migrants or terrorists until proven differently.

This visa system is just one of the effects of unrecognisably changed politics which, years ago, was concentrated on creation of friendly neighbourhood of EU using similar tools as in case of socialist Europe: politics of human rights and democracy, and politics of free flow of goods, investments and people. These two were joined, as usual, by cultural politics of mutual understanding and dialogue built over all differences. During the nineties and up to now, after eleven years of so-called Barcelona process, we have two preoccupations of the EU Mediterranean politics: migration and terrorism. The third is, still, the same cultural politics of mutual understanding and dialogue built over all differences. The function of first two kinds of Mediterranean art is to fulfil what cultural politics demands, or better, to fill in the gap of misunderstanding between two sides of the Mediterranean with elevation of the eternally great and charmingly common. While these two kinds of Mediterranean art and culture certainly prove that Mediterranean is a place of past greatness, and that its nature/culture environment is beautiful, it masks EU politics of struggle against migration and terrorism with control and security systems built over Schengen border in a way which still allows that goods and investments, and even profitable slavery go on as usual, together with friendly exchange of polite dialogue between lower and higher cultures treated as if equal. These kinds of art create a good climate for tourism as well, building Potemkin's villages of fun and entertainment literally: the Mediterranean Amusement Parks. Nothing is wrong with that, of course. Just that these kinds of Mediterranean art are, far from being apolitical, politically very functional, especially after the Mediterranean changed from liquid sea with solid continents into solid sea with liquid continents. For instance, the EU is usually referred to just as Europe; within its Mediterranean programs Balkan ex-Yugoslav states are not eligible, in spite of being in the Mediterranean, and may become eligible when they enter accession process; but Turkey is eligible, not as an accession country but because it is Mediterranean Moslem country of the South; Bosnia and Herzegovina is not eligible for dialogue, even if it is Mediterranean and Moslem, because it is on the European side, it is Balkan country and it is not a EU state; all EU member countries and not just those of the Mediterranean, are eligible as Mediterranean countries according to EuroMed platform, of course, as they are all together, as EU, the final result of the Mediterranean cradle.

Peripheral zones, says Balibar with Greece and Mediterranean in mind, are zones »where secular and religious cultures confront one another, where differences in economic prosperity become more pronounced and strained, consti-

<sup>11</sup> Marino Niola: »The Invention of the Mediterranean«, *Sites of Exchange. European Crossroads and Faultlines* (Ed. by Maurizio Ascari and Adriana Corrado), Rodopi, Amsterdam and New York 2006, p. 76.

tute the melting pot for the formation of a people (*dēmos*) without which there is no citizenship (*politeia*) in the sense that this term has acquired since antiquity in the democratic tradition."<sup>12</sup> What is at stake now and in Europe are the modes of inclusion and exclusion in the European sphere<sup>13</sup>, so that "the stakes revolve instead around the invention of a citizenship that allows us to democratize the borders of Europe, to overcome its interior divisions, and to reconsider completely the role of European nations in the world."<sup>14</sup> Here, at the borders of Europe, these policies of exclusion/inclusion are formed and experienced, and here is decided what will become of the European citizenship as an unresolved political problem: European apartheid, or a new image of a people emerging from aporia between membership in historical communities (*ethnos*) and continued creation of citizenship (*dēmos*).

Art projects and artworks can follow these policies, consciously or not, and are thus political art projects and artworks. Their own policies »back to the Mediterranean sources of tradition« or »expressing Mediterranean nature/culture life environment« support that part of politics which develops so-called dialogue between cultures as a counter-balance to anti-migration and anti-terrorism of the other parts of EU politics. The scandal of Danish caricatures was quite a revealing moment of this politics really. Its story does not speak about freedom of expression, nor about the violation of religious or cultural principles of the Other, in this case Islam principles of iconoclasm. Even caricatures themselves are deceiving, because they are not caricatures at all: caricature exaggerates so much that it does not represent stereotypes but destructs them, otherwise it is not funny. Here, we did not deal with caricature, we dealt with an image of the Other as it is, without any exaggeration: that is how EU sees Islam in its Mediterranean politics, really. The same goes for response to caricatures in countries of Mediterranean South: the distorted image of EU they exhibited is how they see the EU: a neo-colonial hypocrite preaching human rights and democracy for a change, instead of this or that kind of Christianity, and offending the Others at the same time without any care for their human rights and dignity, preaching its values without making a break, and therefore not listening to the Others at all. It is, again, not a caricature, it is a prevailing representation of the Other.

## 4. Art's Geo- and Bio-politics

The third kind of Mediterranean art is consciously political, but it is different from traditional political art as well, not only in Mediterranean, of course. Emily Jacir, born in Betlehem in 1970, well known artist who lives and works in-between Ramallah and New York, exemplifies this kind of art. Her »Ramallah/New York« two-channelled video from 2004, which was shown at the 51. Venice Biennial of 2005 exhibition »Always a little further« in Arsenele under curatorship of Rosa Martínez, records both locations through their everyday life places of encounter (hairdressers, delis, travel agencies, bars and shops), and examines many

oppositions and binarisms as those of familiar interiors and unfamiliar outside, safety of everyday and dangerous history, intimate community and destructive wars and exiles. It is like a luggage of an in-between existence. What makes it less traditional from political aspect is precisely that threatening indifference put in comparison between Ramallah and New York, where we would expect an allegoric accusation and unsurpassable tension between them. Beside being a message of Palestinian situation, it suggest how all these passages are fluid, hybrid, and anaesthetic. Sometimes we could not tell which side we watch, and only their fixed position on the left and right channel of this video as their geo-political identification can give us a feeling that we can recognise one as Ramallah and another as New York.

In »Teatro della cooperativa«, they produced a piece called »La nave fantasma« which was a complete mix of narration styles, from documentary to sarcastic satire, from tragedy to political agitation piece, interactive theatre with movies and video and even cartoon. This mixture of narrative styles was used for presentation of a Mediterranean event: a small boat that sunk on Christmas of 1996, with people on board, or, better, people transferred from one boat to another. They were illegal migrants, and their guides, in spite of bad sea and weather, decided to complete the transaction already paid for and get rid of migrants. Italian police was silent about this incident, aware of political crisis and turmoil deaths of illegal migrants can ignite, as in case of Albanians and Lampedusa. If it were not for a persistent journalist, and fishermen who in next years caught, together with fish, a number of human parts, it would all be forgotten. In spite of tragic narration, the tone of the piece was much stronger than deploring sentimentality. It was a story of Mediterranean divide, of North and South, and of new meaning of this sea. Theatre piece was just one of the results; there were research journalism, advocacy actions, lobbying pressures, and scientific project as well. Scientific project, part of Multiplicity group work, was an analysis of contemporary Mediterranean human geography. It focused on flows of people through the Mediterranean called »Solid Sea«, »a territory ploughed by predetermined routes and insuperable boundaries and subdivided into strictly regulated bands of water. A solid space, crossed at different depths and in different directions by distinct flows of people, goods, information and money.«<sup>15</sup> In Kassel, where Multiplicity group appeared at Documenta 11, there was a discussion on the case of the Ghost Ship, and the new social conditions of the Mediterranean »Liquid Europe and Solid Sea: Towards a New Relation«. Multiplicity group presented itself and their research project »Solid sea« with these words: »Solid sea is an investigation, conceived and co-ordinated by Multiplicity, on the nature of the Mediterranean Sea, on the fluxes that cross it and the identities of the individual that inhabit it. The research collects different case studies and analyses them by means of an index paradigm. Using distinct techniques of observation (from within the context of analysis, using a point of view which allows their comparison), different forms of representation – maps, photographs, videos, narratives – and multiple research formats (interviews, reportages, statistics, shadow-

<sup>12</sup> Etienne Balibar, *We, the People of Europe? Reflections on Transnational Citizenship*, Princeton University Press, Princeton and Oxford 2004, p. 1-2.

<sup>13</sup> *ibid.*, p.3.

<sup>14</sup> *ibid.*, p. 10.

<sup>15</sup> »Doors of Perception 7: Flow« - Stephano Boerie:

»Around a solid sea«, Amsterdam, 14.-16. november 2002;

[http://flow.doorsofperception.com/content/boeri\\_archis\\_trans.html](http://flow.doorsofperception.com/content/boeri_archis_trans.html)

ings) Solid Sea reveals the identities and trajectories that flow through the Mediterranean.«<sup>16</sup>

This kind of elaborated structure and ambitious targeting is no exception. What makes these kind of projects different from various groups from the 1980s, for instance Laibach and Neue Slowenische Kunst, is that they take and represent their job very seriously, without post-socialist atmosphere of self-scepticism and self-ironisation, and that their primary orientation point are not artistic institutions. Another case is »Frontiera Sur«, a project dealing with Ceuta and Melilla, two Spanish enclaves inside Moroccan territory. For instance, »Europlex«, a video by Ursula Biemann (whom we can find in many other projects of this kind) and Angela Sanders, explores ways of living and presents cartography of the struggle of authorities against possible ways of living in such conditions (smuggling, daily migration for menial service jobs, post-colonial third world industries). It is done again through everyday lives of people, and with ambition to explore and reveal patterns. The main pattern, of course, is in this case a fence around Ceuta, to protect the European Union from this people who are part of the European Union, being part of Spain, but are »dislocated« in time (two hours difference between Spain and Morocco), in space (being in Africa and neither in Europe nor in the EU), in identities (third world identity, Arab culture, living defined by geopolitical position and enclosure). By the way, this year they built a third fence around Ceuta, with well known European Union politics that the third world countries of Mediterranean have to prevent migrations, smuggling, trafficking and terrorism admitting EU to do it on their own territory, controlling flows and their police forces as well<sup>17</sup>. Again, this collective included artistic, research, advocacy and other kinds of work and engagement.

We may conclude that, in case of individual artists or groups, we have a new kind of *Gesamtkunstwerk*. But universal work of art involves one or many different arts and techniques to build the highest aesthetic effect of sublime totality. Here, no totality is constructed – it is already here, present as globality's locality, and sublimation is not the product, strictly speaking, of artistic and aesthetic effects. The relationship between scientific research, policy proposals, lobbying, public relation management, NGO activities, advocacy and art does not offer grounds where aesthetic dimension of art would give them a common context, or aesthetic appeal, or revealing of metaphysical totality. Even more, we cannot speak of co-operation between art and other domains on equal terms and not under the hegemony of the aesthetical, because there are no specific and unsurpassable borders and limitations between art and non-art, science and non-science, politics and non-politics. To study and represent borders, limits, divided identities, closures, cleavages and their shifts, liquid and hybrid substance, a construction surpassing those borders and limitations has to be made, to reveal global geo- and bio-politics.

Why do I call it Mediterranean art? Well, there are similar artistic projects everywhere, of course, because globality is producing the same patterns of life anywhere. At the begin-

nings of discussion on globalisation, together with post-modernist fashionable discourse, there was a lot of talk on post-modern fluent identity and disappearance of the subject. What was shown as new way of life was going on at global scale as individual's global territory (»The world is your playground!«), with recognisable points of security and controllability on any local level (global hotel chains, TV channels, global English as universal means of conversation, global food chains, global sport events ...) and local coloration of differences displayed as amusement park, while this global *cosmopolites*, having breakfast in New York and dinner in Hong-Kong, really passed his or her time in the virtual reality of computers, mobile phones and other attachments. But, on the other side of such post-modern *bourgeois*, there are those who were put under control, using multiple and very creative ways of producing enclaves, enclosures, divides, borders, limitations, walls and fences. Under such conditions, every move you make is transgression, and survival itself may serve as a proof of criminalised activity, because it is not possible to survive any other way. The Mediterranean is a locality/glocality of these processes, not the only one, of course, but one that belongs to EU and is its product. Here, images of »the cradle of civilisation« and of »the primordial beauty of life« are used as platforms which cover the cellar of divided cells and unburied bodies.

That is why all three kinds of the Mediterranean art are political arts. And, that is why they are Mediterranean, but they are not contained within geographical location of the art-world only. They cross borders in clandestine ways of their own.

<sup>16</sup> »Multiplicity, Liquid Europe and Solid Sea« (Multiplicity: Stefano Boeri, Maddalena Bregani, Francisca Insulza, Francesco Jodice, Giovanni La Varra, John Palmesino, Palo Vari, Maki Gherzi, Giovanni Maria Bellu.

<sup>17</sup> For these politics, see: Ritvica Andrijašević, »The Southern Gate to Fortress Europe«, *Policy Perspectives 2006 – Islam and Tolerance in Wider Europe*, Open Society Institute, Budapest 2006, pp. 30-50.

# INTERPRETING NIETZSCHE: MYTH AND SENSUALITY IN NEOCLASSICAL ARCHITECTURE. THE GREEK CASE

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## 1. Introduction

This paper attempts an approach to Neoclassical architecture through the scope of Michel Foucault's genealogy of history. Interpreting Nietzsche, Foucault proposes a genealogy of history fundamentally opposed to any attempt for a metaphysical foundation of man and the human knowledge<sup>1</sup>.

With Nietzsche, the metaphysical basis upon which the totality of Western civilization has been built, is put under quest. The shaking of the ground is based on the assumption that knowledge derives from the instincts, without been one of them. Knowledge is acquired and not inherent in human nature. Existence can be understood and justified only in aesthetic terms. The origins of art and of all human creativity are to be found in the dual aspects of human nature, the Apollonian dream and the Dionysian intoxication. Art, science and philosophy are all forms of illusion. Through the illusion of art, man interprets and re – enacts life experience, giving birth to a meaningful, ordered world<sup>2</sup>.

## 2. Foucault interpreting Nietzsche

Michel Foucault, extending the application of the work of Nietzsche to the whole field of theory and practice within *logos*, stresses the principal role which interpretation occupies in contemporary philosophical thinking.

According to Nietzsche, Foucault argues, there are not archetypal signs; there are only interpretations. Every new interpretation does not interpret a sign but a previous interpretation. Every new interpretation appropriates and subjugates another, already existing interpretation. Words themselves are for Nietzsche interpretations. Interpretation is a violent act of subversion and inversion. Its motive powers are *allegory* and *suspicion*. They reside in the core of language and generate words<sup>3</sup>. In this sense, Classical, Roman, Renaissance and Neoclassical architecture constitute a series of interpretations without the necessity of any metaphysical or other archetype.

The *heteroclit*, which resides in emotions, love, conscience, instincts, constitutes the historical – as opposed to the

metaphysical – truth/ illusion about things. It is to be found not in identity, agreement, harmony but in disagreement, separation, denial<sup>4</sup>. A history of a series of interpretations of this kind, which mainly deals with relations of domination and denies any absolute archetype, constitutes for Nietzsche a genealogy<sup>5</sup>.

Through the rejection of the precedence of a descendent and absolute subject of knowledge, Nietzsche makes possible a history of truth as genealogy, Foucault insists. According to Foucault, the genealogy of history functions in three ways, opposite to the Platonic conception of history: the first function of genealogy consists in parody and destruction of reality, the second in dissolution and destruction of identity, the third in destruction of truth or destruction of the subject<sup>6</sup>.

Next, we will discuss these three functions of genealogy, with reference to Neoclassical architecture.

## 3. First function of genealogy 3. A. PARODY AND DESTRUCTION OF REALITY

This function opposes to history as recollection or recognition.

The historian offers to the European of the 19<sup>th</sup> c. – an anonymous and miscellaneous human type – alternative identities, more real than his own. The Greek archetype finds a principal position in the masquerade. The work of the genealogist is to put into motion the great carnival of time, where all masks return eternally. The non–reality of Neoclassicism recalls our non–reality.

Genealogy is a travesty of history, it exposes and parodies the identification of our weak individualities with mighty realities of the past, over and over again. Through genealogy, Nietzsche says, “we will discover the area where even we can be original, may be also parodists of the world history and clowns of God”<sup>7</sup>.

## 3. B. THE DIONYSIAN ORIGIN OF CLASSICAL ARCHITECTURE – DESTRUCTION OF THE ARCHETYPE

“We hear nothing but the accents of an exuberant, triumphant life, in which all things, whether good or bad, are deified.

And so the spectator may stand quite bewildered before this fantastic superfluity of life, asking himself what magic potion these mad glad men could have imbibed to make life so enjoyable that, wherever they turned, their eyes beheld the smile of Helen the ideal picture of their own existence, *floating in sweet sensuality*<sup>8</sup>.

His quotation from Nietzsche's "Birth of Tragedy" refers to the statues of the Olympian gods standing on the gables of the Doric temple. The Greeks created the Olympians celebrating life through a *sweet sensuality* – Nietzsche argues – in order to temper the dread, the horror of existence, which the Greeks never ceased to feel very close after their separation for the Primal Unity. Sensuality is the result of the aesthetic necessity for beauty, inherent in the *principium individuationis*, the primordial desire for appearance, represented by Apollo. In this milieu, the term *sensuality* mentioned in the quotation, indicates the experience of beauty as an "exuberant", "triumphant", superfluous, "joyful" expression of life. Existence can be understood and justified only in aesthetic terms.

Art is the first implication of the *principium individuationis*. Nevertheless, individuation presupposes the delimiting of the boundaries of the individual, that is to say *measure*. Apollo, requires *measure* by his disciples. As far as *measure* bears a principally moral sense, it can be built only on self-knowledge<sup>9</sup>. The Apollonian Greek, Nietzsche suggests, had to recognize that underneath beauty and proportion, his existence lied on a hidden substratum of suffering and of knowledge, revealed by the Dionysian, Titan-like state<sup>10</sup>. Doric art in particular, constitutes the permanent dwelling of the Apollonian<sup>11</sup>.

George Hersey, in his book "The Lost Meaning of Classical Architecture", attempts to reveal the Dionysian "truth" underlying the Apollonian "appearance" of Classical architecture<sup>12</sup>. He investigates the meaning of the names of the ornamental components of the temples, in relation to the way sacrifice was performed.

Greek sacrifice involves the transformation of an animal into a god and then the fusing of that animal – god with the worshippers. Hersey suggests that classical ornament represented the remains of sacrifice. After sacrifice the relics are arrayed on altars and shrines.

Greek sacrifice consists in the deconstruction and the reconstruction of the victim. In myth, dismemberments are mainly connected with Dionysus. Dionysus himself was butchered and cooked by the Titans. Walter Burkert refers that frequently in myth the remnants were collected and brought back to life<sup>13</sup>. Many of these myths were foundation myths for religious rituals and so a precondition for the erection of temples, Hersey argues<sup>14</sup>. Hersey suggests that:

"We can see the temple as a grove of sacred trees decorated with battle or hunting trophies, or decked out like an altar, with reconstructed sacrifices. Rows of teeth, garlands, horns, bones, weapons and other things taken from victims figure in such displays, as do flowers, fruit, and the like"<sup>15</sup>.

Hersey applies sacrificial meaning to architectural terminology. Thus, the vertical fillets created by the fluting of a column called *πάβδοι* (rods), can refer to "the bunched shafts used in constructing Dionysus images"<sup>16</sup>; a triglyph can be a thighbone chopped into three, according to the sacrificial practices; *γλυφή* means something curved or chopped off<sup>17</sup>; the drops – *σταγόνες* – beneath the triglyph can be drops draining from the thighbones<sup>18</sup>. The whole temple is interpreted by Hersey in this way.

Taking this interpretation which deals with the "Dionysian" aspect of Classical Greek architecture into account, we could proceed further suggesting that it was *sensuality* on the one hand and *measure* on the other that gave Classical architecture its "Apollonian" aspect.

For instance, under the process of individuation, the strong tapering of both shaft and capital – which attached the column to the stylobate and the architrave rather than stressing its individual character – was progressively reduced and modified. This aimed to emancipate the column from the stylobate and the architrave and in this sense, lead to maximum sensual pleasure deriving from the driving of the *principium individuationis* to its limits. At the same time, the principle of measure gradually lead to lack of differentiations between the front and flank columns, while the axial spacings in most of the Doric temples are uniform in both sides<sup>19</sup>.

From the end of the fifth century B.C., excesses of individualism on the form of the temple, express plurality at the expense of sensuality and moderation. Lifeless typification comes forth through typified mathematical relations, in order to cover up the Dionysian threat which undermined Classical architecture.

## 4. Second function of genealogy

### 4. A. DISSOLUTION AND DESTRUCTION OF IDENTITY

This function opposes to history as continuity or tradition. It aims to the methodical dissolution of our identity to innumerable heterogeneous systems, which forbid any identity. According to Nietzsche, we struggle to articulate together and secure our weak identity under one mask. This identity is a parody as far as it is inhabited by a multiplicity of mortal – not metaphysical – souls, which are in a constant conflict among them, about which one is going to prevail. Genealogy is opposite to history as "worship of the ancestors" which aims to identify the continuities that constitute the origin of our present and preserve them with great care for the future, Nietzsche insists. Genealogy puts into question the place where we were born, the language which we speak, the cities in which we live, in order to unveil the heterogeneous systems which – although covered up by the mask of tradition – forbid any identification<sup>20</sup>.

Classical Greek architecture comes out as an illusion or metaphor, as a mask of the horror of existence, as far as it was born by that horror. It stemmed out of the Premordial World of the Titans in the same way in which a rose comes out of a thorny bush, insists Nietzsche. We could say that its

origins were lost in myth. Neoclassical architecture does not have this origin. It borrows the Classical mask in order to cover up the uncanny feelings stemming from the totally new political, social and economic conditions brought about by its age. Thus, Neoclassical architecture is not a direct derivative of the *principium individuationis* in Nietzsche's sense. In fact, under these circumstances, the function of the *principium individuationis* is cancelled.

Nevertheless, Neoclassical architecture sees Classical Greek architecture almost as a work of nature. In this sense, Neoclassical architecture is identified with truth and beauty.

In the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, human desire to dominate nature was expressed through the Enlightenment's search for objectivity of a rational basis. In the pursuit of a sort of "natural ethics", the architects of the Enlightenment looked upon Greek architecture as the true style from which Roman and Renaissance architecture had drawn their origins. Greek architecture represented the most ancient period of human history; it was seen almost as a work of nature<sup>21</sup>. Thus, architectural truth and consequently beauty could be derived directly from nature, without any metaphysical or other implication. In fact, the Neoclassical approach to architecture had to be closer to the Classical one than anyone before.

Within the eighteenth century, Laugier's position on the one hand and Winckelmann's on the other, gave rise to the two diametrically opposite poles around which Neoclassical architecture evolved in the nineteenth century: the Structural Classicism which emphasizes structure as the source the truth and derives its ultimate principles through a rational appreciation of nature; and the Romantic Classicism which, on the basis of a secular aesthetics, stresses form as the essence of architecture. This duality was handed down to Modern architecture<sup>22</sup>.

The Romantic Classicism in particular, was involved with a passionate attempt to reveal measure and proportion as carriers of the absolute truth which underlied Classical architecture as well as nature and had its origins in Neoplatonism and the Renaissance.

#### 4. B. NEOCLASSICAL ARCHITECTURE IN GREECE. ITS RELATION TO TRADITIONAL AND POPULAR ARCHITECTURE

In the mid-nineteenth century, Classical revival in Europe offered an opportunity to the new born Greek state to strengthen its national identity. Neoclassical architecture played a very important role in this attempt.

The architecture of the recovered nation was the so-called traditional Greek architecture on the one hand and popular architecture on the other. They both developed within the Byzantine world and their roots are lost in the Greek, Roman and Mesopotamian worlds. Neoclassical architecture came totally from the outside, disrupting the continuity of local architecture and becoming a symbol of unity, continuity, beauty, harmony, truth at its expense. Far from being a rebirth of the ancient Greek architecture, it constituted a totally heterogeneous system.

As soon as the new Greek nation was born, European and Greek architects, city-planners and archeologists undertook the duty to recreate the splendour of the ancient Greek city. Excavations started throughout Greece destroying all higher archaeological layers in order to reveal the Classical one. The German Romantic architect Schinkel proposed the erection of king Otto's palace on the Acropolis and designed the architectural plans for it. Nevertheless, this was considered "an unbelievable daring" solution which everybody refuted<sup>23</sup>. The Danish brothers Christian and Theophilus Hansen who were Schinkel's pupils created some of the most important Neoclassical buildings in Athens, as the Library, the Academy, the University, the National Museum.

Resemblance to the Parthenon seems to be the ultimate principle of architecture. Thus Cleantes, another of Schinkel's pupils, criticizes Kautadzoglu with reference to the Arsakeon mansion, arguing that it does not 'express the idea of the Parthenon properly (... ) it makes no honor to us to erect Parthenons in Athens imitating Tuscan architecture, when all the other nations in Europe are proud to imitate Greek architecture at all their buildings in general'<sup>24</sup>. Even the architecture of the Byzantine churches started to conform to the new principles.

The city-planning of the capital of the new-born nation almost ignored anything existing in the city between the Classical period and the nineteenth century. The point of departure for the planning was, of course, the Acropolis, but it took into account some other ancient monuments as the *Stadium* and the Library of the Roman emperor Hadrian. Some place was left free for excavations at the foot of the Acropolis. The palace was originally placed facing the Acropolis at the other end of the main axis<sup>25</sup>.

Towards the end of the nineteenth century, despite the reactions against anything following different morphological and compositional rules from the Parthenon, buildings using Byzantine, Gothic, Renaissance elements started to appear, following similar trends in Europe. They were made by architects as Ziller, Kautadzoglu, Zegos and others. On the other hand, the builders and workers, who had come to Athens in order to work for its reconstruction, erected their own dwellings at the slope beneath the Acropolis rock. They were popular houses with Neoclassical elements.

Gradually, traditional as well as popular architecture adopted elements of Neoclassical architecture as symmetry of the composition in the plan and the elevations, architectural elements in relief as cornices around the openings, projected parts of columns and capitals, clay elements as *acrocerama* and balustrades, cast-iron railings. As a result of this heterogeneous montage of elements, we often have an architecture much more alive than the official one, much closer to man, as well as to nature.

## 5. Third function of genealogy

### 5. A. DESTRUCTION OF TRUTH

This function opposes to history as knowledge. It aims to the sacrifice of the knowing subject. The mask of the

historical conscience shows that it is stubbornly attached to truth purified of any passion. However, if historical conscience puts itself under examination, it will discover the plurality of forms and transformations of the will to knowledge: instinct, passion, searching mania, vulgar refinement, wickedness, Foucault maintains<sup>26</sup>. It will discover that injustice in inherent in knowledge and that knowledge, based on instincts, is not a carrier of love and happiness but of hatred and hostility. What motivates it, is not the desire to attribute the thing its true being, but to keep it at a distance and destroy it<sup>27</sup>.

## 5. B. THE INVASION OF THE UNCONSCIOUS AND NEOCLASSICAL ARCHITECTURE

We argue that Neoclassical architectural space is a theater where architecture as a series of masks embodies the role for which it was chosen. In fact, Neoclassical architecture is the mask which covers up the collision among the social and the political forces, the passions and the instincts, the rational and the irrational, the desires and the dreams of the man of the Enlightenment. Some time later, this collision gave birth to the new, Modern era.

It seems that in the dawn of the new era, man with his changing attitude toward nature, felt more secure to cover up the dramatic situation with a familiar face coming from the past. Classical architecture offered him this opportunity. It embodied truth – not metaphysical – which means absolute and eternal in the sense of Plato or Aristotle, universal though and atemporal within the limits of the Enlightenment. Under these circumstances, the only chance for sensuality to operate within the field of the primordial myth was to be restricted and isolated in the human subconscious and become an object of psychoanalysis and Sigmund Freud's approach to the dream, in particular.

In Nietzsche's "Birth of Tragedy", the Apollonian and the Dionysian spirit alike are instincts and both belong to the sphere of myth. Nevertheless, they are in opposition between them, similar to the opposition which exists between dream and intoxication. Dream is the expression of the *principium individuationis* while intoxication destroys individuality and leads to a complete "oblivion of the self"<sup>28</sup>.

In an analogous way, Freud gives the definition of the dream through its relation to individuality: The dream, according to Freud, is a (disguised) fulfillment of a (repressed, forbidden) desire<sup>29</sup>. The realm of the repressed desires is the unconscious. Its main characteristics are: lack of the contradiction, emotional condensation and transposition from one representation to another, atemporality, replacement of the external reality with the mental one, the principle of pleasure (*edone*)<sup>30</sup>.

Freud in his paper *Das Unheimliche*, published in 1919 uses the German word *Unheimliche* which means "uncanny", unhomely, to indicate the dread caused to the human subject when he suddenly experiences reality as non-reality. Freud conceives of the "uncanny" not as something strange and unknown but as something very close and familiar which has been repressed in our minds and has

to remain hidden<sup>31</sup>. In the same way, classical forms used by Neoclassicism have to keep their true Dionysian origin hidden, although they have been called forth in order to express the fundamental relation of Neoclassicism with nature. Nevertheless, Neoclassicism's conception of nature bears a totally different meaning from that implicated in Nietzsche's Apollonian/Dionysian spirit or Freud's feeling of the *Unheimliche*.

Despite this, Neoclassical architecture can still cause aesthetic pleasure experienced as sensuality in the psychoanalytic sense. Architectural elements for instance, far from been related with any sacrificial practice could cause pleasure in the way in which a dream could do. That is to say as "a masqueraded fulfillment of repressed desires".

In the case of Greek architecture, it seems that pleasure is stronger when Classical elements "decorate" traditional or popular architecture resulting to an heterogeneous but peculiarly "harmonious" whole.

## 6. Conclusions

This paper constitutes an attempt to interpret Neoclassical architecture in Nietzsche's aesthetic terms. We tried to approach the aesthetic aspect of Neoclassical architecture within its historical dimension, by building up its genealogy. To this aim, following Foucault, we were engaged in a series of destructions.

The Europeans of the 18<sup>th</sup> and 19<sup>th</sup> centuries appealed to Classical architecture in search of an identity more real than their own. Nevertheless, Classical architecture had come out of totally different conditions of existence. As Nietzsche proposes, Classical architecture came to life out of the Titanic-barbaric world of the instincts through the *principium individuationis*, which gave it appearance and measure. In this spirit, Hersey proposes that the architectural elements of the Classical temple originated in sacrificial practices which performed the mythical dismemberment and reconstruction of Dionysus.

The dismembered Dionysus, occupying the entrance of the path to Neoclassical architecture, was certainly not what the Enlightenment would be satisfied to accept as an archetype. It seems that the Enlightenment's project to approach nature as a homogenous, quantified, measurable, objective whole, included Classical architecture. Not so much in order to pay respect to it, as in order to hide behind the Classical appearance its domination and power instincts. The new-born Greek state offered a challenge for a glorious return of Neoclassicism to its place of birth. This masquerade took place at the expense of traditional and popular architecture.

Nevertheless, the adoption of Neoclassical elements by traditional and popular architecture presents a particular aesthetic interest. We argue that under these circumstances, aesthetic pleasure experienced as sensuality can be approached through Freud's conception of dream and the unconscious. This seems to be the only way in which we can escape from and still remain deep in genealogy.



## (ENDNOTES)

- <sup>1</sup> See Michel Foucault, "Nietzsche, la genealogie, l'histoire", pp. 1004-1024; see also: "Nietzsche, Freud, Marx", pp. 592-607 and "La verite et les formes juridiques", pp. 1406-1514; all included in the collection of Foucault's writings: *Dits et écrits*, I, 1954-1975, Quarto Gallimard, Paris, 2001.
- <sup>2</sup> Friedrich Nietzsche, *On the genealogy of morals, (Zur Genealogie der Moral*, Leipzig, c/1887); see also: *The birth of tragedy*, transl. Clifton Fadiman, N. Y., 1927 (*Die Geburt der Tragodie*, Leipzig, c/1872).
- <sup>3</sup> Op. cit., Foucault, « Nietzsche, Freud, Marx », III, par. 4.
- <sup>4</sup> Op. cit., Foucault, « Nietzsche, la genealogie, l'histoire », II, par. 5.
- <sup>5</sup> See discussion in: *ibid.*, IV, par.7; Foucault's discussion refers to Nietzsche's works *On the genealogy of morality*, *Beyond good and evil*, *Human All too Human*, *Untimely mediations*.
- <sup>6</sup> *Ibid.*, VII, par. 1.
- <sup>7</sup> See discussion in: *ibid.*, VII, par. 2.
- <sup>8</sup> The quotation is taken from: op. cit., Nietzsche, *The birth of tragedy*, 3, par. 2.
- <sup>9</sup> *Ibid.*, 4, paragraphs 1&2; see discussion in: Youli Rapti, "To phaenomeno tou Ellinicoi Politismou mesa apo ton Friderico Nietzsche" (The phenomenon of Greek Civilization through Friedrich Nietzsche), publ. in the volume: *Philosophia, Antagonisticotita ke Agathos Vios (Philosophy, Competition and Good Life)*, Ionia eds, Athena, 2005.
- <sup>10</sup> *Ibid.*, Nietzsche, 4, paragraphs 3, 4; Rapti, pp. 253-256.
- <sup>11</sup> *Ibid.*, 4, par. 5.
- <sup>12</sup> George Hersey, *The lost meaning of Classical architecture*, The MIT Press, Cambridge Massachusetts, U. S. A., 1988.
- <sup>13</sup> Walter Burkert, *Homo necans: The anthropology of ancient Greek sacrificial ritual and myth*, Berkeley, 1983, pp. 3ff; ref. in: *ibid.*, p. 16.
- <sup>14</sup> *Ibid.*, Hersey, p. 16.
- <sup>15</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 21.
- <sup>16</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 23.
- <sup>17</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 31.
- <sup>18</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 31.
- <sup>19</sup> For an alternative interpretation see discussion in: Helen Tatla, "Architecture and politics in the Classical city-state", incl. in: *Acropolis Restoration*, Academy eds, London, 1994, pp. 218-9.
- <sup>20</sup> Op. cit., Foucault, "Nietzsche, la genealogie, l'histoire", 7, par. 3; ref. to: Nietzsche, "The traveller and his shadow" cited in: *Opinions and aphorisms mixed*, par. 17; *Untimely mediations*, II, 3; *Human All too Human*, par. 274.
- <sup>21</sup> John Summerson, *The Classical language of architecture*, Thames & Hudson Ltd, London, 1988(c/1980), p. 90.
- <sup>22</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 91. For Winckelmann's classification of antique sculpture, see for instance: Peter Collins, *Changing ideals in Modern architecture 1750-1950*, Faber & Faber, London, 1965, pp. 79-81; see also: Joseph Rykwert, *The first Moderns*, The MIT Press, Cambridge, Massachusetts, 1983(c/1980), p. 275-80.
- <sup>23</sup> Joannis Traulos, *Neoclassice Architectonike sten Ellada (Neoclassical Architecture in Greece)*, Athena, 1967, pp. 22-23.
- <sup>24</sup> St. Cleanthes, *Echthesis peri tou en Athenes Anagertnessomenou catastematos tes Philocpaedeutices Etaerias (Report on the erection of the establishment of the Friends of Education Society)*, Athenae, 1845, p. 16; reference cited in: Demetris Philippides, *Neocellenice Architectonice, (Neohellenic Architecture)*, ed. Melissa, Athens, 1984, p. 86.
- <sup>25</sup> See discussion in: *ibid.*, Philippides, pp. 73-5.
- <sup>26</sup> Op. cit., Foucault, "Nietzsche, la genealogie, l'histoire", 7, par. 4; ref. to: Nietzsche, *Happy Science*, par. 333, *Beyond Good and Evil*, pars 229 & 230.
- <sup>27</sup> Op. Cit., Foucault, « La verite et les formes juridiques » .
- <sup>28</sup> Athena Mirasyeze, *E Aesthetice meta ton Nietzsche (Aesthetics after Nietzsche)*, eds Euridike, Athena, 2004, pp. 6; Mirasyeze argues that with Nietzsche the contribution of philosophy to aesthetics has arrived to its limits; aesthetics becomes a matter of psychoanalysis.
- <sup>29</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 65.
- <sup>30</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 161-2.
- <sup>31</sup> Sigmund Freud, "The Uncanny" (*Das Unheimliche*, 1919), publ. in: *Art & Literature, The Pelican Freud Library*, vol. 14, ed. Albert Dickson, Harmondsworth: Penguin Books, 1985, pp. 335-376.

## CONTEMPORARY ART AND THE MEDITERRANEAN

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1. One can count at least 21 countries or separate territories with Mediterranean countries. Some people might claim there are in fact more than this. My list is as follows:

- Spain
- France
- Italy
- Malta
- Slovenia
- Croatia
- Bosnia-Herzegovina [Neum]
- Serbia & Montenegro
- Albania
- Greece
- Turkey
- Cyprus
- Syria
- Lebanon
- Israel
- [Palestine/Gaza]
- Egypt
- Libya
- Tunisia
- Algeria
- Morocco

2. It is clear when one looks at this list that they have very different historical traditions and are at different stages of cultural development.

3. Our perception of the true facts of the situation is, however, to some extent clouded by the fact that nearly all are now eager to enter the world of contemporary art. This entry is characterized by a paradoxical mixture of cultural co-operation and cultural competition.

4. One symbol of the new situation, here as elsewhere in the world, has been a proliferation of large scale international exhibitions. The long-established Venice Biennial has now been joined by the Istanbul Biennial and the Tirana Biennial. Greece celebrated hosting the Olympics with two big shows of a kind not previously seen

in Athens – the Deste Foundation's 'Monument to Now' and the Benaki Museum's 'Outlook'. What is, however, rather noticeable about all these events, however, is that they tend to showcase the work of non-native artists. When native artists are featured, it is because they have succeeded in establishing reputations in northern Europe and/or the United States. That is, they tend to be valued at home only to the extent that they are known abroad. Many of the best-known supposedly 'Mediterranean' artists are permanent expatriates, for political or economic reasons, or for a combination of the two.

5. Where housing and displaying contemporary art is concerned, the different Mediterranean countries operate at very different levels. Barcelona, probably the most vibrant city culturally on the shores of the Mediterranean, is magnificently equipped with exhibition spaces – these include MACBA, with a building designed by the American architect Richard Meier; the Caixa Forum, housed in a vast complex adapted from an early 20<sup>th</sup> century factory by the Japanese architect Arata Isozaki, and the Fundació Miró on Montjuïc, with a building by José Lluís Sert. In France Nice has a large and relatively new Musée d'Art Moderne et d'Art Contemporain. In Athens the Benaki Museum has a large new building for contemporary shows in Piraeus Street, which he link between Athens and its port. In Istanbul there is a new, privately financed Museum of Contemporary Art beside the Golden Horn. Israel has a number of important museums that offer contemporary exhibitions. These include the Tel-Aviv Museum, the Helena Rubenstein Pavilion for Contemporary Art and the Haifa Museum. Despite these innovations, contemporary art in the countries I have listed is often weakly financed, and does not penetrate very deeply into the local culture.

6. Mediterranean culture is not a coherent unity – in each of the territories I have listed contemporary artists make reference to local narratives.

7. In Spain, for example, 'official' culture remains obsessed with the need to distinguish the Spain of today from the Spain of the Franco years – some-

thing that conflicts with the pronounced taste for realism found among Spanish private collectors, who sustain what is perhaps the most active art market in the whole Mediterranean region, rivaled only by Italy. Another issue is Catalan separatism.

8. In France, French centralism tends to drain cultural energy from the Mediterranean shoreline, and direct it towards Paris. The new museum in Nice celebrates the so-called Ecole de Nice, whose most prominent members were Yves Klein, Arman and Martial Raysse, but the glory days of this art movement are long since over and nothing very distinctive has replaced it

9. In Italy, there is a conflict between Arte Povera, and conceptual ideas in general, and Pittura Colta, which implies a self-conscious return to 'classical' values. The artists of the Pittura Colta tendency tend to be identified with Rome, rather than Milan, and a number of the most prominent teach in Catania. Because museums of contemporary art are consistently under-financed in Italy, private collectors and commercial art fairs have a great influence on the development of taste. This tends to give Pittura Colta an advantage over its rivals. However, Italians remain fascinated by a kind of international 'contemporary' art that is now in fact some 20 years out of date – witness numerous recent exhibitions devoted to the art and career of Andy Warhol. While the Venice Biennale remains an international forum, ideas about what and what is not 'avant-garde' have become increasingly ossified. And, because of the attractions of the Italian setting there are numerous examples of a phenomenon I call 'parachuting in'. I mean by this permanent or semi-permanent displays of avant-garde, or supposedly avant-garde, art that have little to do with the Italian context. The latest example is the display of so-called Post Pop work, from the collection of the French billionaire François Pinault, and featuring artists such as Jeff Koons and Damien Hirst, which is now on show at Palazzo Grassi in Venice.

10. In the territories of the former Yugoslavia, there is another conflict, between a kind of democratic 'craft' tradition, which expresses itself through print-making, and a fascination [as in many formerly communist countries] with conceptual and installation art. Conceptual work rooted itself in these territories, as it did throughout Eastern Europe, as a way of making political points in a way that would escape the attention of the authorities.

11. Greece, despite the activities of the Deste Foundation (another example of 'parachuting in'), has remained curiously limited and provincial in terms of its own local production. Despite the presence of the George Kostakis Collection of avant-garde Russian art from the early 20<sup>th</sup> century in the new State Museum of Modern Art in Thessaloniki, Greek art inclines towards traditional forms of painting and sculpture, often with a slightly Expressionist twist. There are strong links between the Athens art community and the Ecole des Beau-Arts in Paris, where many leading Greek artists completed their studies.

12. Contemporary art in Turkey has been strongly influenced by the information offered by successive editions of the Istanbul Biennial. If Greece has strong cultural links with France, Turkey is influenced by its cultural ties with Germany. In addition, there is an underlying dialogue about the increasingly strong Islamic element in Turkish politics. A number of leading Turkish artists are strongly opposed to this Islamist tendency.

13. In Israel, there is an extremely active visual arts avant-garde. This, not surprisingly, has ties to the United States. Another influence, however, comes from Russia. A number of leading Israeli artists are Russian immigrants, and Russian is increasingly the second language of the Tel-Aviv art world.

14. This leaves the Islamic countries, who are in many respects are sharply divided from the rest of the Mediterranean art world. The most active, in avant-garde terms, is Egypt. This is partly due to the recurring Cairo and Alexandria Biennials. The latter describes itself as a 'Biennial of the Mediterranean', and endeavors to represent the whole of the Mediterranean basin. It is also due to the increasing complexity and sophisticated of Egyptian society. Avant-garde art, nevertheless, has shallow roots, and there is not much in the way of a market for contemporary art. Artists and curators make exhibitions for each other and for a very small elite of interested spectators.

15. Syria, Lebanon, Tunisia, Algeria and Morocco are all influenced by their historic links with French culture. In all of these, there is a tendency to look for indigenous Islamic forms, which can be adapted for contemporary use. Though all these countries participate in the Cairo and Alexandria Biennials, they also take part in the Sharjah Biennial in the United Arab Emirates. This, which is a specifically Islamic event, probably has more influence, as a point of cultural interchange, than its two Egyptian rivals.

16. Lebanon prides itself on its cultural sophistication, and the Lebanese art world rapidly becomes aware of new stylistic and technological developments elsewhere. There is also quite a strong feminist element in much new Lebanese art, which is also much less preoccupied with Islamic themes than is the case in neighboring countries. These developments, however, have sharply checked by the recent Israeli invasion and the political and social chaos that ensued.

17. Palestine is a special case. Thanks to the long-lasting conflict between the Palestinians and Israel, a powerful propaganda art has developed in the Palestinian territories. In terms of artistic activity, these, despite their desperate economic condition, rival Egypt and Lebanon in terms of artistic productivity.

## AESTHETIC SENSIBILITY OF THE PRIMORDIAL STRUCTURES IN THE 20<sup>TH</sup> CENTURY ARCHITECTURE

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Ideas regarding the aesthetic of architecture and its relationship to natural structures developed during and particularly after the time of Renaissance, emphasized two principal fields of discussion. First, engaging the transcendental and metaphorical relationship between architectural structures and the structure of the human body; and the second, driving upon the logic of natural grove according to permanent laws in developing structures, so well represented in Laugier's theory of the primal hut.

However, during the nineteenth, and particularly on the beginning of the twentieth century, one can encounter appearance of ideas linking the principles of architectural structures to the elements and formations in nature which can be named as 'primordial'. In this paper we will define the notion of the term 'primordial' in a particular sense. Regarding elementary understanding of natural structures, the term can principally refer to the crystalline formations, and natural forms as shells. In this sense the term 'primordial' is very close to the term 'chthonic', however separated from its mythological content, and keeping only its elementary notion.

For the purpose of this paper from particular interest is the notion of 'primordial' as mentioned by Semper. In his writings the term was used with regard to the idea conditioning further development of 'certain prototypical forms' in a particular sense. From the Semper's explanation one can understand the 'primordial idea' as a fundamental creative sense which allows appearance of 'infinite variations' of these prototypical forms (Urformen), however always 'conditioned by more closely determining circumstances'.<sup>1</sup>

Even if not exactly defined, knowing the Semper's architectural theory, we can assume that 'prototypical forms' belong to natural formations. Development of the characteristics of each form happens according to the properties of the material in which it appears. In the context of our theme Semper's text emphasizes two extremely important aspects regarding the very essence of the creative process. First, it is obvious that the notion

of 'primordial idea' reflects the area of human sub consciousness, or in other words, aspects of our elemental belonging to the nature and its laws. The 'primordial idea' is more a fundamental natural sense which triggers the creative process, than a rationally developed skill. However, Semper recognizes particular circumstances, as the second aspect of a creative process, guiding fundamental natural sense towards more articulated definition of 'prototypical forms'. Regarding Semper's architectural theory we can assume that the nature of these circumstances is determined by historical, social, technical, and environmental aspects guiding the architect's personal process of thinking.

It is interesting to emphasize that Semper actually through these two aspects defines the creativity as an objective process. The 'primordial idea' can be, at its very best, defined as objective universal natural sense working through objective circumstances. In that context, property and the character of materials are more influential in the process of development of forms, than architect's personal, subjective will. Moreover, there is a strong feeling that that what we call the subjective component of creativity partakes in the fundamental natural sense of the 'primordial idea' as a universal genius. Its development, we can assume, is also conditioned by 'particular circumstances'.

Through the process of analyzing ideas and examples related to the late nineteenth century German aesthetics, the expressionist movement, and the architectural circle around Bruno Taut, one can have an inside into the further development of this particular aesthetic sensibility governed by the notion of 'primordial'. The essential values of so defined aesthetic sensibility are based on principles established by an inexorable link between human senses and elementary laws of natural structures, the interpretation of which is, however guided by the necessity of individual genius and feelings of an architect. How deeply were the ideas regarding elementary aesthetic sensibility rooted in the ground of natural laws, can be seen in Zeifing's exploration of the primordial values of the golden section, as a proportion inherent with almost all natural structures.<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Semper, G. (1989). *The Four Elements of Architecture and Other Writings*. Cambridge, Cambridge University Press. p. 136

<sup>2</sup> Lotze, H. (1913). *Geschichte der Aesthetik in Deutschland*. Leipzig, Verlag von Felix Meiner. p. 306

Moreover, in this period, it seems that the elementary notion of Semper's 'primordial idea' developed into the aspect defining the inner, even spiritual content of the architectural work. In that way established spiritual content become a prototype, or better, a primordial aspect of the aesthetic feeling. In the writings of Herbert, Zeifing, Schlegel, Weisse, and Lotze, among others, this idea is mostly exposed in that sense, but bringing up the subjective fantasy as a power mediating the elementary, natural, primordial sense and the objective aspects of the creative process.<sup>3</sup> However, as Herbert noted, the elementary aesthetic sense was still an instant transformation of a feeling developed by a basic sensual impression. In that context, subjective components of expression, even if belonging to the universal natural order and laws, are playing important role in development of an aesthetic sensibility.<sup>4</sup>

More than that, subjective fantasy was defined as a power transforming the primordial sensibility of elementary forms into the primordial aesthetic sense. In that context, subjective fantasy still keeps its link with the notion of the 'primordial idea' and its character as a natural elementary sense, and equally with the aspects of sub consciousness. That can be seen in Prolss writings, where the fantasy is closely linked to the notion of artistic reflection working on the primal level of the creative process and aesthetic experience.<sup>5</sup>

It is very important that the reflection of these ideas one can encounter in the first two decades of the twentieth century, in theories developed by Bruno Taut and other architects of the, so called, Crystal Chain group. Through their letters, established as a way of communication among the members of the group, they developed an important debate regarding essential aspects of creativity in architecture. One of the main points of this debate regarded the question of universality and individuality in the creative process. Bruno Taut as the patron of the idea of the universal genius emphasized that the architect should be only the 'medium of the primal forces'.<sup>6</sup> His, often emotionally colored statements, targeted mainly ideas of Herman Finsterlin, a firm advocate of the personalized creative intuition and individuality. However, despite this disagreement, both of them emphasized the idea of elementary forces linking the architect's creative genius (universal or individual) to the 'primitive laws of expression' and the primordial sense of form. Echoing Semper's ideas regarding the importance of materials and to them belonging technological processing, they still observed the process of creating a form through the 'fixation of organic movement', stressing the importance of the basic aesthetic expression of primordial structures.<sup>7</sup>

It is particularly important to emphasize the constant value of this kind of aesthetic sensibility in the twentieth century architecture, and its contemporary appearance in the latest work of Frank Gehry, particularly the Guggenheim museum in Bilbao. His intuitive approach to the development of form

in the creative process reflects an idea of primordial structures, however in a more organic way. It is, certainly, an embodiment of that 'organic movement' mentioned by Finsterlin, emphasizing strongly the values of an individual and highly subjective aesthetic sensibility.

In the context of our discussion, the main question at this point can be related to the character of, so many times mentioned, primordial structures and prototypical forms. With the exception of Semper's opinion, aestheticians and architects regarding this issue are inspired with the world of crystalline structures, forms of shells, or at the end of the twentieth century in Gehry's case, with snakes and fishes. These forms are undoubtedly bringing up a feeling of primordial, and a sense of elementary natural powers and laws of growing; as Lotze stated, the real primal aesthetic sense lies mainly in the impression with the crystalline forms.<sup>8</sup> In that way, creative fantasy and the primal aesthetic sense were inseparably linked to the nature as a field of energy and laws governing the elementary human creativity. This aesthetic feeling developed so strongly that even Riegel made a critic regarding the domination of crystalline structures in theories at the end of the nineteenth century, as an ultimate inspiration in development of architectural forms.<sup>9</sup>

It seems that this idea culminated at the beginning of the twentieth century in the architectural fantasies and few projects of Bruno Taut and other architects of its circle. However, it is important to emphasize that all these ideas were rooted in the impression with the primordial forms, in the effects of materials, and in the dynamism of new technologies. Only these three aspects build up a complete aesthetic feeling, and the quality of their combined use was a truthful indication of new aesthetic sensibility. Moreover, during the first two decades of the twentieth century the idea of crystalline structures as metaphors of spiritual purity was clearly exposed. It became even a metaphor of a new social order, transforming the 'primordial idea' and elementary aesthetic senses into a complex aesthetic sensibility, where the ultimate aesthetic value of an architectural expression corresponds with the higher natural order of the human society. The crystal clarity of an architectural idea and its material expression became a spiritual generator of new social values, integrating all members of the community around new aesthetic. However, this integrating energy, and complex aesthetic sensibility still emanated from the elementary natural senses for primordial forms, materials and basic laws of expression.

It is very important to emphasize that those ideas regarding the higher spiritual and social order never have been divorced from the perceptual quality of materials and structural character of forms. More than that, the metaphorical nature of a form, and the clarity of its meaning actually depended on the perceptual clarity of used materials and structures. Trough texts and particularly in drawings of the architects of

<sup>3</sup> Ibid. pp. 259, 306, 372, 413, 537

<sup>4</sup> Ibid. p. 259

<sup>5</sup> Prolss, R. (1904). *Ästhetik: Belehrungen über die Wissenschaft vom Schönen und der Kunst*. Leipzig, Verlagsbuchhandlung von J.J. Weber. p. 136

<sup>6</sup> Whyte, I. B., Ed. (1985). *The Crystal Chain Letters: Architectural Fantasies by Bruno Taut and His Circle*. Cambridge, Mass., The MIT Press. p. 20

<sup>7</sup> Ibid. p. 47

<sup>8</sup> Lotze, H. (1913). *Geschichte der Aesthetik in Deutschland*. Leipzig, Verlag von Felix Meiner. p. 537

<sup>9</sup> Riegel, A. (2004). *Historical Grammar of the Visual Arts*. New York, Zone Boks. pp. 351, 352

the Crystal Chain group established the idea that a particular form, its spiritual character and primordial sensibility grows and develops only within exactly defined material properties and structures.

The roots of this idea can be undoubtedly found in Semper's position and in texts of few important nineteenth century German architectural aestheticians. For example, in Prolss 'Ästhetik' one can encounter the term 'principles of primordial unity' regarding the natural conditions of the creative process of an architect.<sup>10</sup> In the spirit of that position, the Crystal Chain group developed the idea that a form and the character of its material and structure are inseparable, belonging to the same natural conditions of the development of the aesthetic sensibility and the creative process. In one of his letters, Bruno Taut defined form as "the productiveness of matter", and he emphasized the importance of the "skill and lightness of construction".<sup>11</sup> In that way, the metaphorical meaning of the form was actualized through the character of materials and their naturally belonging structures.

Architecture as a metaphor for the spiritual illumination of the society and each human mind was actually depending on the translucency, transparency and reflectivity of the used materials, their perceptive clarity and crystalline effects. For example, Paul Goeßch in his "Architektonische Aphorismen" links that what he calls 'mineral architecture' with forms of drops, rays of light, flames and waves. Moreover, in his understanding these forms were forms of movement, of a dynamic feeling important for developing the metaphorical character of architecture and the natural sense of growth.<sup>12</sup> It is very important that hand by hand with this position developed the important idea of a transparent and light construction, unifying the inner and external into a natural structure. However, this inexorable link between the metaphor, form, material and structure was thought to work on the level of primal, primordial senses, perceptual and aesthetical. It targeted the basic sensorial processes of perception, immediate emotional response to the spiritual content, and according to that adequate aesthetic communication.

Another group of examples developing a particular 'chthonic' character of an architectural form and its naturally belonging materials proves that this particular aesthetic sensibility existed as a principle. Architectural forms based on the sensorial qualities of cave and shell structures necessarily developed in adequate opaque materials and heavy structures. However, as in the first group of examples, the process of aesthetic communication worked on the level of the primordial sensibility and feelings.

It is interesting that a very similar aesthetic principle can be seen in the creative process of Frank Gehry, and his approach in defining an architectural form. The example of the

Guggenheim museum at Bilbao is extremely illustrative in that context. Use of stone base, metal, glass and water which determine the character of the form and its exterior/interior structure reveals the aesthetic sensibility strongly related to that what we can call 'primordial idea'. The inspiration with the fish or snake skin and skeleton is perhaps dominant (or consciously dominant)<sup>13</sup>; however, the materialization of the whole composition reveals a particular concern with the exact use of these four dominant materials.

The stone base with its firmness and visual coherence; glass which breaks that firm and solid structure as a crystal grooving out of it; metal skin which, as a mineral, waves in an endless growth; and water reflecting the whole form, completing the aesthetic perception, are elements of a feeling of a primordial structure. This impression is also emphasized by the position of the entrance. Visitors surrounded by stone, glass and metal are moving down, into the cave encountering the world of powerful energies and natural structures. The whole visual effect is essentially based on our primal aesthetic sense which reacts instantly to the primordial structure and its elements.

From a particular interest is the structure of the whole building. Inside the space we can feel the natural particularity of each part of the building through the construction and used material. It reveals exactly on the level of primal aesthetic sensibility the form character and to it belonging quality of the exterior surface. The sense of the perceptual unity of the interior/exterior correlation is based on the sensorial properties of that what Luckhardt named as basic elements of a pure form: 'straight line, curve, and irregular form'.<sup>14</sup> Here, the purity of form is established on the pure sensibility of primordial structures and its components; on the elementary feelings and aesthetic response.

One aspect more reveals the closeness of all the named architectural concepts: the importance of technology. In his understanding of the importance of Paxton's Crystal Palace, Semper emphasized the unavoidable role of technology of new materials and constructions in achieving the particular sensorial property of transparency and the feeling of the spatial endlessness.<sup>15</sup> The inexorable link between technology of new materials and construction and new architectural expression was after that a constant theme in German architectural aesthetic writings, and it culminated on the beginning of the twentieth century. However, the call for the use of technology and its importance for the creative expression were not uncritical and blindly technocratic. In that context, Taut was talking that "the higher causality is revealed in the generally detrimental effect of technology..." However, the exactness of technology "illuminated by the poetic" is acceptable and positive.<sup>16</sup> Poetic feeling being intuitive and reflective, and so close to the 'primordial idea', corrects the rationality of science bringing into it the element of infinity and metaphysics. In that

<sup>10</sup> Prolss, R. (1904). *Ästhetik: Belehrungen über die Wissenschaft vom Schönen und der Kunst*. Leipzig, Verlagsbuchhandlung von J.J. Weber. p. 130

<sup>11</sup> Whyte, I. B., Ed. (1985). *The Crystal Chain Letters: Architectural Fantasies by Bruno Taut and His Circle*. Cambridge, Mass., The MIT Press. p. 73

<sup>12</sup> Ibid. p. 62

<sup>13</sup> Van Bruggen, C. (1997). *Frank O. Gehry: Guggenheim Museum Bilbao*. New York, The Solomon R. Guggenheim Foundation. p. 57

<sup>14</sup> Whyte, I. B., Ed. (1985). *The Crystal Chain Letters: Architectural Fantasies by Bruno Taut and His Circle*. Cambridge, Mass., The MIT Press. p. 101

<sup>15</sup> Semper, G. (1989). *The Four Elements of Architecture and Other Writings*. Cambridge, Cambridge University Press. pp. 164, 165

<sup>16</sup> Whyte, I. B., Ed. (1985). *The Crystal Chain Letters: Architectural Fantasies by Bruno Taut and His Circle*. Cambridge, Mass., The MIT Press. p. 161

sense, poetic feeling introduces into the relationship between technology and creativity the possibility of primal aspects of expression. It shouldn't be too much emphasized that that sense of technology and its role in the creative process can be recognized in Gehry's work. Technology is not the purpose but a tool for a poetic expression of primordial sensibility of the architectural structure.

At the end of this short exploration, we can finally emphasize the basic aspects of the aesthetic sensibility of primordial architectural structures. It is undoubtedly built on the foundations of natural structures, the sense of organic growth and movement, the importance of a poeticized use of new technologies, materials and structures. However, one of the most important aspects defines the character of the relationship between the architectural expression of primordial structures and the natural laws and forms. It can be reduced on the question of imitating nature which is a very old one.

However, in the context of our theme this question reveals a particular position crystallized in analyzed ideas regarding the particular aesthetic sensibility of form and structure. As Luckhardt emphasized in one of his letters, "architecture should not imitate nature but should itself be nature. . . own autonomous structural existence. . ." <sup>17</sup> It seems that the architectural visions and buildings based on the aesthetic sensibility of primordial structures necessarily achieve the feeling of a particular organic existence. Based on elemental subconscious associations with natural structures, and working on the level of primordial ideas, intuition and artistic reflection, this emotional correspondence between human primal aesthetic sensibility and natural laws achieves a universal level of expression and dynamic perception. Strong materiality and organic construction are the aspects of the space structure, provoking its particular dynamism which works on the levels of the spirit and matter. In that context, there is no unification of spirit and matter because they can never be separated on the first place. They are not existing hand by hand, but inseparably one in another, as a result of intuitional and reflective process of creation and perception.

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<sup>17</sup> Ibid. p. 77

# TOWARDS A COMPUTATIONAL MODEL OF STYLE FOR AESTHETIC DESIGN

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## 1. Introduction

Style is very influential in the formation of a building design. It strongly characterises a building as it enables the designer to transform it by grouping or classifying existing design-building elements according to some distinguishable properties and patterns [Gombrich 68-Simon 75]. Architectural style acts as an ordering rule in architectural design that enables building elements, patterns and processes to be structured, providing an order [Shapiro 61-Ackerman 63-Smithies 81]. Style is an important dimension of the aesthetic aspect of a building [Beardsley 66-Michelis 01-Michelis 02]. The role of style during the phase of conceptual design is crucial because many fundamental stylistic intentions are introduced by designers as guidance for the development of a design [Simon 75]. Style modelling is difficult because of its qualitative character. For that reason the introduction of style in a computer aided design system is tedious and complicated. A quantification of style is problematic because, information about style is interwoven with information about each of building's elements, its morphology and their syntax. A representational scheme that could express styles would enable quantification of the aesthetic qualities of style. In the area of Computer-Aided-Design exists a great lack of stylistic preferences which it would enable designers to express their stylistic intents.

### 1.1 RESEARCH SCOPE

The objective of this work is to develop a model to capture and express qualities of the semantics of style that are important in reasoning with stylistic design principles. A general structure for modelling architectural style should respond to two issues:

- Stylistic information must be represented independently of any style category.
- Style representation must follow a frame, which can be easily adapted among the different architectural styles, and incorporate all different knowledge of styles.

This paper is organised as following. In section 2 is presented the related work. In section 3 we present some approaches on the concept of style and we provide an operational definition of architectural style. In section 4 we present the proposed architectural style model within the declarative design system. We apply this model for the modelling "Santo-

rini", "Metsovo", and "Byzantine" style. In section 5 we present a design case study that is used for adaptation to the three modelled styles. Conclusions are drawn in Section 6 concerning the applicability of the model.

## 2. Related Work

In this section we discuss some relevant effort and approaches on design by style. The understanding of design style will be a great advantage in developing advanced Computer Aided Conceptual Design – Computer Aided Design (CADC – CAD) tools in design [Sequin 05].

The derivation of procedural knowledge of style is useful in design. Such knowledge enables designer to uncover the source producing style characteristics of products and to use them for producing designs under that style and/or evolve further a style. Recent studies of the explicit representation of style include the style of Taiwanese traditional house style [Chiou 95], and the style of renaissance architect Palladio [Stiny 78]. Both approaches imply the description of style in the form of rules of composition for shape grammars. These approaches can be manipulated by the computer to generate designs with that style.

Aesthetic and in particular stylistic concepts are very important in every design product. Many researchers underline the significant missing of systemisation and formalisation of aesthetic related design knowledge [Breemen 98]. However the main problem it was the fact that same aesthetic properties can be associated to different shape parameters. As a result it remains difficult to provide an absolute definition of aesthetic character, which makes very inconvenient the explicit linking with aesthetics knowledge.

In a research program academic researchers with industrial partners approach the styling process in product design. Styling is a creative activity where the designer's goal is to define a product that evokes a certain emotion while satisfying obligatory ergonomics and engineering constraints. Their approach enables the development of tools to preserve the aesthetic design intent during the required model modifications [Podehl 02- Giannini 03].

In an academic research work designers are provided with a language that can communicate stylistic concepts to the computer for form generation, [Chen 97]. The 'Style Profile'



is a mechanism for comprehensive formal style analysis. Such mechanism could record essential properties of styles, and it could serve as a framework for style knowledge accumulation. Such infrastructure enables the communication of stylistic concepts to computer for form generation of products.

In a series of efforts [Wang 03] a research is focused on the impact of form features on style through the topological structure and geometrical variation. In particular, they evaluate the influence of design style by feature geometry. They argue that a combination of topological and geometrical attributes on both levels of global and detail perception could enable a definition of a design style. The user applies a set of procedures on stylistic features of an object. In general they deal with objects like swords, and statues heads.

A group of researchers, [Ding 01], approach the interpretation of architectural style using *syntax – semantic* model. According to them, it is possible to regard a style as a representation of common particular meanings called *complex semantics* expressed from a set of designs. Style could be analysed into an ensemble of complex semantics as emerged by the synthesis of some simple semantics after the articulation of a group of forms. The choices of the specific forms, and the creation of some new forms), are directed by the design decisions. The notion of simple semantics could derive from *properties* of forms (geometric) and *relationships* (topological, organisational) among them.

The research work of H-J Park [Park 05] concerns the study of beauty in morphological design based on the assumption that universal aesthetic principles exist and are quantifiable. The resulted computer-based system for quantification of aesthetics in the presence of proportionality is utilised in the analysis and synthesis of various design artefacts.

### 3. The concept of style

We provide two approaches for the concept of style, the object and the process view. The definition of style through an object view depends on the set of common characteristics of products. The emergence of style is based on a repetitive appearance of a set of 'features' in a number of products, such as buildings, paintings, poems, and music. A list of the characteristics of a work of art includes: first convention of form, secondly material, and thirdly technique. [Ackerman 63]. In a similar approach *formal* and *qualitative* characteristics are more decisive for the formation of a style [Shapiro 61]. For that reason he proposed the following aspects for the description of the style: form elements or motives, form relationships and qualities. An analogous approach appeared in architectural history [Smithies 81-Pothorn 81].

In the process view the formation of a style is achieved through some important factors that characterise a creative process. This approach is concentrated in the way of doing things. During a process three aspects play an important role, choices, constraints, and search orders implemented in a process [Chan 92]. The birth of a style could emerge around a set of choices between ways of performance or procedures during the creative process, [Gombrich 60- Simon 75]. For Gombrich, these choices are of the kind of perceptual cues, while for Simon these choices are those that emerge during the design process. The decisions made among alternative choices characterise a style. The second factor is the constraints that were imposed during

the creative process. Constraints could strongly affect the selection among choices. The third factor is the search order. Simon argues that human designers provide specific procedures for the priority of goal satisfaction and constraints application [Simon 75]. During the design process, the order of satisfaction of certain aspects of design imposes a sequence in the satisfaction of the design aspects. Such a procedure could result in a distinct form and composition for the design artefact.

#### 3. 1 STYLE IN ARCHITECTURAL DESIGN

The stylistic formation of a building is one of the most complex and intrinsic of the architectural design problems, [Chan 01]. Style strongly characterises a building as it enables the designer to transform it by grouping or classifying existing design elements according to some distinguishable properties and patterns [Krier 88-Michelis 01]. A style could be conceived as a system of constraints by architects. In this way, a system of constraints that refer to a particular style limits the decision within a smaller part of the problem space [Akin 86-Chan 94]. Style is used by designers for the reduction of the solution space. Style enables selection of one among many satisfactory solutions because design problems generally do not have unique optimal solutions. Therefore the role of style in architectural design is twofold; firstly it works as a synthesis principle allowing the emergence of building designs while it provides imaginative order within a complex-non-measurable but ordered design domain [Lawson 94- Rowe 91]. Studies on consistencies or patterns of buildings and spatial features are a common approach to investigate and model architectural analysis and criticism [Michelis 01-Clark 96].

#### 3. 2 MODELLING ARCHITECTURAL STYLE

For the modelling of architectural style we provide mixture between the object and process view. The global and local morphology of building elements and the relationships between both structural and spatial elements, evoke the specific spatial qualities of each architectural style. Morphology, like function, can be regarded as a very general type of information, relevant to almost all elements in a building design, and even to many non-physical concepts. They are two fundamental issues in an architectural concept of building, and in particular the building style. First the representation of its solid constructed region, the spaces that are enclosed within that constructed frame, [Joedicke 85]. Second the kind of relationships between spaces and structural elements, and the relationships among the spaces itself, [Joedicke 85]. As a result, we accept that architectural style is composed by:

- A set of features represented by a set of spatial and structural elements
- A set of principles which are represented by constraints in the form of properties of and relations among the aforementioned elements.

In order to regard any legitimate element as stylistic, considered as a feature and also participating in the corresponding principles, for each of the following paradigms, we employ Chan's [Chan 00], working definition about properties of features:

- It has a form or composition distinguished by some particular configuration and a contextual relationship with other features.
- It is a member of a set of prominent forms repeatedly used.

### 3. 2. 1 STYLISTIC FEATURES

We define two categories of stylistic features for spatial and structural building elements. *Spatial Features* includes physical or virtual spaces that satisfy a function according to the program (brief) of a building. Examples are the spaces for sleeping (bedrooms), living (living rooms). *Structural Features* includes all objects for the definition of the structural design of a building. Examples of such features are slabs, (ceilings, floors), walls, columns, and beams.

### 3. 2. 2 STYLISTIC PRINCIPLES

A style provides relationships for the placement of its elements, and it obeys their internal relationships. Such relationships specifically determine both morphological and structural-functional properties, (e.g. such as the precise place and internal proportions of roofs for a style of a house) of a building. The principles comprise the following kinds of relationships: those between spatial and structural elements, between spatial elements, and between structural elements. These relationships can be classified in two categories: topological and formative principles. *Topological Principles* refers to logical relationships between stylistic features. Spatial organisations are expressed with topological relationships ("space  $x$  is adjacent to the north wall of space  $y$ "). Topology defines constraints for the geometric design space. Topology relations include: *Adjacency*, *Orientation*, *Proximity*, et cetera. *Formative Principles* introduces the formative constraints that manipulate geometry characteristics. These constraints affect both the spatial and formal level of a design. They specify and establish the form language, frequency, complexity, and variation of the characteristic forms of a style. The formative category is also presenting the physical dimensions of the building elements, and it also identifies characteristics concerning area, proportions, et cetera. Manipulations like *Rotation*, *Shift*, *Overlap* and geometric transformations. Formative category includes: *Symmetry*, *Rhythm*, *Repetition*, et cetera.

### 3. 3 THREE CASE STUDIES OF ARCHITECTURAL STYLE

For the needs of the current research three examples of architectural style are modelled. These are style of "Santorini", [Michelis 81], the style of *Metsovo*, and "Byzantine" style [Buchwald 99]. All styles introduce a specific typology of spaces, and their shape is expressed through characteristic geometrical primitive forms.

#### 3. 3. 1 STYLE "SANTORINI"

Most of the Santorini edifices share a relatively simple primary form. In the following we consider the building as a volumetric composition. Nearly all of the existing habitations can be broken down to the following elementary, volumetric set-up: a rectangular volume, topped by a vaulted roof. Santorini, houses have a specific composition of spaces, while their shape is expressed through characteristic geometrical primitive forms, that of a quadrilateral (cuboid) (Figure 1).

The spatial composition is either a nearly rectangular plan, or a deeper than longer plan. In general the width of the spaces is greater than its length while the spaces have the same length in many cases. Additionally spaces do not overlap and they are adjacent. In many cases buildings have a separate ground floor and first floor. The roofs play a prominent role in the perception of the composition as a whole, whereby different roof forms are applied. A building of Santorini style usually

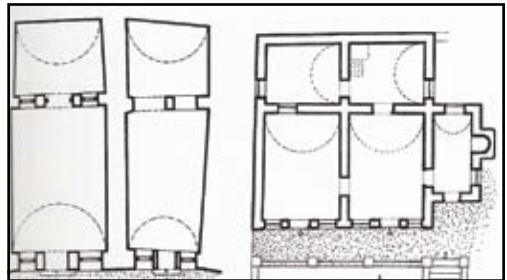


Figure 1 Santorini habitation

TOPOLOGICAL	FORMATIVE	FORMATIVE
Bedroom and living room are adjacent	Bedroom and living room are coaxial	Building plan is wider (deeper) than long
Bedroom is placed on the north side of living room	Bedroom width is equal Living room width	Room roof has flat form
Rooms are coplanar	All rooms are deeper than long	Room roof has vaulted form

Table 1 Santorini style characteristics

combines a number of vaulted and flat roofs. The main characteristic of the roof morphology is that the roofs extend towards the longer dimension of the building, (Table 1).

#### 3. 3. 2 STYLE "METSOVO"

We consider the building as a basic volumetric composition. The regional architectural style introduces a specific typology of spaces, and their shape is expressed through characteristic geometrical primitive form, that of a quadrilateral (Figure 2).

The Metsovo style has a distinct character that it is longer than wide. In general the length of the buildings is greater than its width or they have a rectangular shape. The upper floor is covered by gable roof while the reception area's roof is placed vertically to the longer dimension of the building. This kind of building offers an example of space overlapping: the kitchen and the bedroom in many cases share the same space area.

A significant characteristic is the fact that the part of a room or two (in general the living and /or the guestroom) is overhang for better view. A building usually combines two cable roofs. A long roof that follows the length of the building, while the second in general covers a central space and it is placed in a vertical position relative to the main roof, (Table 2).

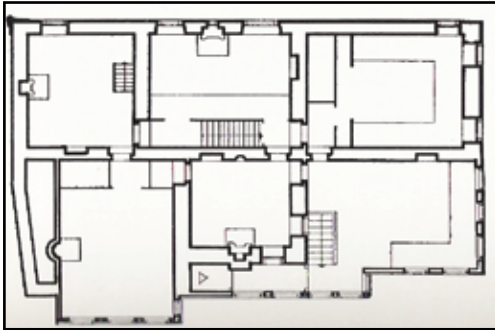


Figure 2 Metsovo habitation

TOPOLOGICAL	FORMATIVE	FORMATIVE
Bedroom and living room are adjacent	Bedroom and living room are coaxial	Building plan is longer than deep
Kitchen is placed on the east wall of living room	Bedroom width is equal Living room width	Rooms are deeper than long
Bedroom is placed on the north wall of living room	All rooms has same height	Room roof has gable form

Table 2 Metsovo style characteristics

### 3.3.3 "BYZANTINE" STYLE

In Byzantine style I the most dominant building type, is aisled basilica [Buchwald 99] Byzantine style I is characterised by dynamic line, while buildings are clear and simple. Each unit (the nave, the aisles, the transept, the narthex, and apse), is a discreet, separate, unequivocal geometric form, which is experienced as a single spatial element, (Figure 3). The narrow and long proportions of the nave amplify the dynamic quality, and the location of the major entrance at one end of the nave on the major axis of symmetry.

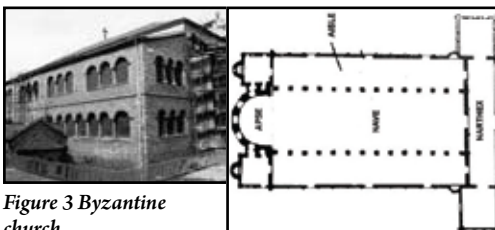


Figure 3 Byzantine church

## 4. Declarative modelling of architectural style

In this section we introduce a declarative modelling framework for architectural style that will be based on a declarative framework within a declarative design system. The layout of a style is a set of its compositional features, represented by abstract geometric elements. Features are composed together by means of stylistic principles which determine the architectural character of the design. The abstract elements used for representing spatial and building elements are called *geometric entities*.

### 4.1 DEFINING SEMANTICS FOR ARCHITECTURAL STYLE

In this subsection we present two tasks. First a variety of constraint types is defined, each of which can capture specific aspects of stylistic principles. Second a set of features is defined, integrated with the constraints.

The introduction of style within a declarative design system [Makris 05] was based on a representation that concerns declarative modelling [Plemenos 95] and architectural knowledge. We utilise a framework that facilitates the identification of semantic relationships which is needed to define architecture-oriented building models [Makris 03]. The description of a building is organised in categories of objects with common properties and relations. Any relations between objects as well as properties of objects could be specified by the declarative semantic of constraints [Plemenos 91]. Within the MultiCAD system a domain-specific knowledge base has the three following tables of *Type of Objects*, *Type of Properties* and *Type of Relations* [Miaoulis 02]. The *Type of Objects* table contains a number of specific objects for the definition of spaces and roofs. The *Type of Properties* table contains fundamental information for the description of the scene objects. This table has many properties, for example *Placement* (with a range for minimum-maximum coordinates), *Length*, *Width* and *Height* of objects. The *Type of Relations* table contains relations which define the description of a building. Among these relations they include these that play an important role for the expression of the architectural style principles. We consider the development of an architectural style to happen through the composition of spatial planning and the roof morphology of a building [Makris 05].

#### 4.1.1 SPATIAL PLANNING

We define the constraints that concern the arrangement of spatial objects [Makris 05]. First, set of six relations that concern object's placement within the site (*Place\_North-East*, etc). Second a set of constraints about adjacency and nearness between objects (*Adjacent\_North*, etc, *Near\_North*, etc). Third, constraints that expresses overlapping between two objects (*Overlap\_North*, etc). Considering the geometric properties of spaces we have relations between two spaces (*Same\_Length*, *Same\_Width*, et cetera). And properties about a space like (*Longer\_than\_Wide*, *Longer\_than\_High*, et cetera). We have also relations for the relative placement of spaces within an axis that connects their centres (*Axial-Centre\_North-South*, *Axial-Centre\_West-East* et cetera). The constraint *Align* is defined as adjusting spaces position in relation to a certain line. Also, objects locations can be adjusted with regard to any

part of these elements, i.e. edges, centres, or axis. All these constraints could be applied both on the building as *global* constraints, and /or the spaces as *local* constraints. Given the above model we could define the three earlier described styles as in the following tables, (Table 3) and (Table 4).

STYLISTIC CRITERIA	WEIGHT
<i>Local</i>	
Deeper than Long	1
Deeper than Long	1
Same Width	1
Same Width	1
<i>Global</i>	
Building Compactness	10
Non Overlapping	10
Building Deeper than Longer	5

Table 3 Santorini style criteria

STYLISTIC CRITERIA	WEIGHT
<i>Local</i>	
Longer than Deep	1
Deeper than Long	1
Same Length	1
<i>Global</i>	
Building Compactness	10
Non Overlapping	10
Building Deeper than Longer	5

Table 4 Metsovo style criteria

#### 4. 1. 2 ROOF MORPHOLOGY

In order to obtain the characteristic roof forms to particular styles we define two categories of constraints that control the geometric parameters for the roof morphology. The first category contains these which control the consistency of the roof morphology. The second category of constraints controls the degree of curvature, linearity, cavity of the roof form [Makris 05].

#### 4. 2 AESTHETIC EVALUATION

In order to capture the aesthetic intentions of the designer we also introduce a number of aesthetic criteria. Such aesthetic criteria also applied for style evaluation: *Balance, Equilibrium, Unity, Density, Regularity, Homogeneity, Rhythm, Symmetry* (vertical-horizontal), and *Proportion* [Ngo 02], [Staudek 02] [Makris 05].

#### 4. 3 MEASURE OF STYLE

A style could be expressed as a set of stylistic criteria. The measure of style (degree of adaptation to a style) is an aggregate of stylistic criteria for a building composition. A stylistic scale is created, with total adaptation (i.e. a building is 100% adapted to a particular style) at one end, and lack of adaptation at the other (i.e. a building is 0% adapted to a particular style). The formal expression of the evaluation is given as a linear summation of the weighted evaluations.

$$SE = \sum_i^a a_i f_i(E_i) \quad 0 \leq a \leq 100$$

In particular, the function  $f_i$  expresses the local metrics of each stylistic criterion. The utilisation of  $f_i$  shows the contribution of each criterion in the proposed evaluations to the overall evaluation of a building for a style. In order to express the style of a building we imply the calculation of the sum of the number of the stylistic criteria. For each criterion a constant weighting factor  $a_i$  is provided. In the beginning all criteria have a weighting component set to 1, and they have equal importance. Later, during the formation of a combination of criteria for a style, their weight factors are changed in accordance with the demands of the expressed style.

## 5. Evaluation

The proposed modelling framework for architectural style has been integrated within a declarative CAD prototype system [MultiCAD]. The experiments are based on the application of style during architectural conceptual design. We first model and then utilise the three styles in order to generate design alternatives for given building demands. The system offers the designer with successful designs while it provides variations of the specific architectural style. Especially the later result proves that the selection of the specific stylistic criteria were the appropriate in order to provide feasible and alternative variations of the same style (Figures 4-7).

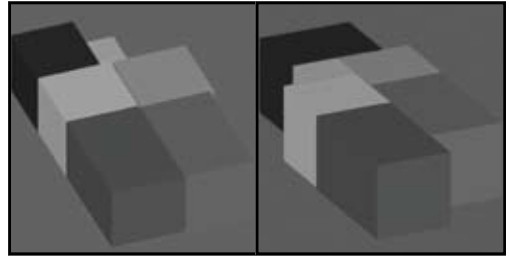


Figure 4 Santorini style spatial planning

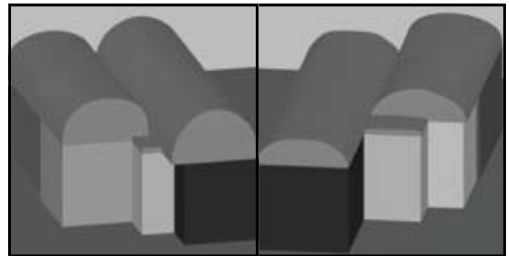


Figure 5 Santorini style roof morphology

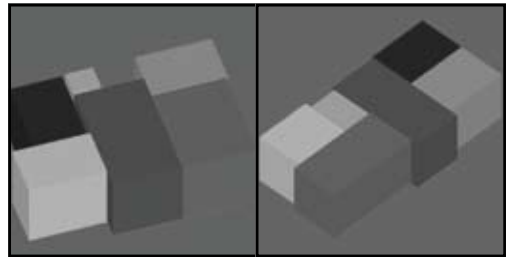


Figure 6 Metsovo style spatial planning

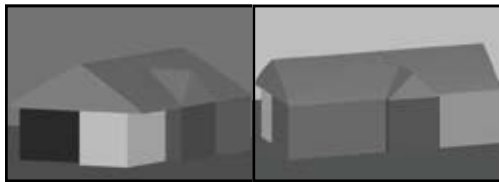


Figure 7 Metsovo style roof morphology

## 6. Conclusions

In this paper we present the development of a model for style. The implementation of this model within a design system has the following results. First the designer can model an architectural style. However he/she can define and model his/her personal style. Second, he/she can utilise a style in order to generate alternative solutions of buildings. In this way buildings design can be adapted to an architectural style.

In general, we should underline, as for every operational methodological tool, that it could outcomes in two directions. First, it provides a useful analysis framework for scholars, researchers, critics and designers. It is a tool capable to achieve a quantitative understanding of the aesthetic issues involved in design, while it can have an impact on style studies. Second, although it can amplify creativity, it could easily trapped designers in a mechanistic way of design. However, if we know the possible problems we could take our risks, and we could profit from the potentialities of this methodology.

## 7. Acknowledgments

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## DU POÏÉTIQUE À L'ESTHÉSIQUE PAR L'INTERPRÉTATION MUSICALE

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### Éléments du sémiologie musicale

Les milieux de la théorie musicale semblent de plus en plus conscients que le rapport entre l'analyse de la musique et son exécution mérite une étude plus approfondie, voire souhaitable d'aborder l'analyse et l'interprétation dans une même perspective. L'interprète doit toutefois trouver un juste milieu entre le spirituel et le réel, sans sacrifier ni l'un ni l'autre. Pour ce faire, il faut établir une distinction simple, souvent négligée, entre l'interprétation et l'exécution, ainsi un certain style d'interprétation s'impose, mais la façon dont cette interprétation est communiquée à l'auditeur dans l'exécution est autre chose. L'hypothèse qui se fait jour et que la musique, qui représente une dimension importante de l'expérience humaine, constitue un aspect spécifique de l'identité personnelle dans sa globalité ; son enracinement dans la sphère des émotions, le rapport qu'elle entretient avec le système de valeurs propres à l'individu, les liens étroits qui existent entre goûts musicaux et style cognitif, constituent quelques éléments à l'appui de cette hypothèse. Dans cette perspective, la musique, loin de représenter un ensemble de contenus et de capacités, est défini comme un segment de l'histoire cognitive, sociale et affective de chaque individu, que l'on peut faire émerger, valoriser et consolider par une réflexion sur sa propre expérience musicale, ses goûts, ses compétences et ses conduites de prédilection. Comprendre une structure musicale pour tenter de l'expliquer et comprendre une musique pour la communiquer sont deux exercices différents qu'entretiennent un rapport intrinsèque et se superposent dans une certaine mesure, mais la superposition n'est jamais totale. L'interprétation musicale implique la compréhension d'une œuvre fondée sur les pensées : sémiologiques, sémantiques esthétiques, sociologiques et psychologiques. Les recherches d'analyse d'une œuvre, dans la perspective sémiologique d'une part, permettent de consolider l'ensemble des paramètres, des règles, des tableaux et des graphiques ; d'autre part nous voulons illustrer le lien entre les trois dimensions de l'analyse sémiologique ; le niveau neutre dans ces rapports avec la poïétique et l'esthétique. La méthodologie utilisée dans l'analyse sémiologique est basée sur les critères suivants : la progression mélodique, la diversité rythmique, les procédés de variation, les registres, l'aspect harmonique de la pièce et l'organisation formelle. Le niveau neutre est descriptif et représente l'inventaire aussi exhaustif que possible, des types de configurations qu'il est

possible de reconnaître dans une partition. Ce niveau neutre fournit une base sur laquelle les configurations des approches poïétique et esthétique seront projetées et représentent l'objectif de retrouver, à partir de la seule trace laissée par le compositeur, quelles sont ses stratégies de production et celles perceptives pour l'interprète qu'il l'exécute et l'auditeur qui écoute l'interprète. La poïétique, qui tourne son regard vers l'amont de l'événement, ne s'occupe pas de l'indescriptible obtenu, ni de l'émotion, mais de la conduite, souvent laborieuse, qui soudain se libère dans la béance de l'œuvre. Et quand elle va jusqu'au bout d'elle-même, elle produit la valeur esthétique de l'œuvre sur la grande route trans-esthétique instaurée par la poïétique. La poïétique est une double opération – productrice et esthétique, l'interprétation sera une production à partir des modes d'investissement technique et affective de l'interprète et par la capacité de reconnaissance et d'adhésion du récepteur. En tant qu'interrogation théorique du processus de création et comme philosophie de la création, la poïétique pense les techniques d'élaboration et de production qu'ils soient ceux basés sur les pensées philosophiques, sociologiques, des sciences exactes, des sciences humaines ou des pratiques dites ordinaires. L'analyse poïétique met en œuvre les matériaux d'analyse de la production et de ses effets étant une entreprise philosophique parce qu'elle met en évidence ses propres moyens artistiques qui caractérisent une production originale. Toutes ces techniques utilisées par l'interprète doivent être vues comme une pensée philosophique transversale de l'œuvre qui est ouverte à l'imprévisibilité, à l'ineffable, à l'inspiration et à l'improvisation (l'imaginaire).

### L'interprète. L'interprétation

L'interprète est bien du côté de l'esthétique, car il est le premier à faire une série de choix à partir du texte du compositeur. Le premier souci de l'interprète est de comprendre le caractère de la musique, le but dans lequel celle-ci a été écrite. Il ne devrait pas partir avec des idées préconçues sur les émotions où l'humeur à exprimer mais rechercher le caractère dans les éléments formels de la musique elle-même. C'est la structure de la musique, résultant de ses composantes mélodiques, harmoniques, rythmiques et dynamiques, qui déterminent à la fois la forme et le caractère. Le caractère est conféré par la structure, et c'est en comprenant pleinement celle-ci que l'interprète pourra transmettre celui-la, alors qu'en tirant la



musique dans un sens ou dans un autre, il développera les deux. Il doit tenir compte des éléments de la structure, donc de la rigueur, en les conjuguant, décide des priorités selon lesquels, les agencer, en fonction de son sens des proportions et de son jugement de l'équilibre.

Dans l'interprétation musicale d'une part la partition doit offrir le témoignage le plus complet possible des intentions du compositeur et d'autre part l'instrumentiste a pour responsabilité d'interpréter, de décorer ces informations et de les représenter dans les moindres détails dans l'exécution, qui doit aussi baigner inévitablement autour de la contingence historique. L'interprète a mission de faire « vivre » une œuvre, de traduire les sentiments que ce texte fait naître en lui : chaque phase de son travail est tournée vers le moment unique où, confiant dans ses possibilités, il délivrera la musique telle qu'elle est et tel qu'il la ressent, comme la plus riche et la plus fidèle expression possible. Le travail quotidien et toute éducation musicale sont les deux approches fondamentales qui devraient contribuer à faire du musicien un artiste total qui sache traduire son message avec clarté et émotion, son rôle est justement de faire « revivre » au sens fort, à travers leur personnalité et leur subjectivité de musicien. Bien souvent l'absence de réelle interprétation musicale est due à l'importance prise par des problèmes techniques qui devraient être déjà résolus, ça lui permettant de jouer son corps et être à l'aise dans la musique, dans un bonheur communicatif.

Il faut admettre que l'interprétation c'est une opération complexe de consciences, de recherche du propre ego, de transfiguration d'une projection du « monde réel », de message codifié, par des conventions explicites des symboles signifiants, aussi c'est la recherche, par inspiration, du l'idéal infini du savoir et de la perfection du monde existentiel. Elle ne se limite jamais sur une transposition sonore des entités constituantes du modèle textualisé, vu que même le modèle ne tend pas seulement sa reproduction. L'art sonore n'est pas une organisation, si « le souffle- l'ineffable » manque, c'est comme un château fort sans vie. Je crois dans le postulat : « la musique c'est la vie » ; donc tous ce que c'est vie peut être exprimé dans le langage musical au niveau de la codification du texte et celle de décodification interprétative. Il faut comprendre la gravité symbolique du texte pour pouvoir s'inscrire sur les orbites signifiants de la vie et de la mort, de l'héroïsme et de l'amour, avec leurs marches impétueuses et leur tourbillon. Pour pouvoir interpréter un « forte » (par exemple) c'est pas suffisant de jouer fort avec des accents ou faire des gestes ou des grimasses si derrière ces choses il n'y a pas l'interrogation : To be or not to be ?

L'interprète qui entre dans le milieu d'un œuvre, il doit accepter que la compréhension des signes et l'interprétation des significations, par des sonorités et transfigurations psychologiques, représentent un univers des recherches et des efforts créatifs basés sur la théorie de la connaissance (de soi même en premier lieu) et de s'imaginer l'infini idéal qui existe du moment qu'on le sent. En fait, l'interprétation est convertie par la perception en objet de plaisir esthétique, ainsi l'esthétique avec l'effet sur la sensibilité de celle qui écoute, fait l'objet d'un jugement esthétique. Pour rendre l'ineffable et le subliminal, c'est-à-dire ce qu'il y a de plus fugace dans la vie intérieure, il ne devait pas s'encombrer de considérations rationnelles. Or, l'impressionnisme est l'art de traduire, par une technique spéciale, le momentané et le fugitif. En découvrant une musique en fixant un moment de

la durée et non plus seulement une tranche d'espace et de volume. De l'impressionnisme, Verlaine a utilisé d'instinct la plupart des procédés : le flou, la coloration des ombres, les effets de clair de lune, de brume ou de neige, la légèreté de la touche, la multiplication d'un objet unique, la notation des séries d'impressions, procédés par lesquels il a pu exprimer l'inexprimable et rendre la durée intérieure et ce qu'il y a d'unique dans la sensation. Il en est de même de la musique où il a joué le rôle de novateur et préparer la voie de l'impressionnisme musical d'un Fauré ou d'un Debussy. A titre d'exemple on peut parler de la Sonate en La majeur op. 13 pour violon et piano qui est l'œuvre la plus représentative de la période de jeunesse du compositeur, marquant sa première manière de composition. Les significations expressives dégagées par les quatre mouvements de la Sonate sont très variés à partir du mystère le plus profond du lyrisme dégagé par le premier mouvement et la sérénité transparente du deuxième jusqu'à l'atmosphère intime en style oriental du troisième mouvement au thème ample et chaleureux entraînant un enthousiasme par le rythme irrésistible du quatrième mouvement. Ces images sont réalisées par une diversité des techniques de la composition, telle que la superposition partielle de la mélodie avec l'accompagnement, le rythme régulier, l'harmonie avec ces modulations brusques et inattendues, des sonorités étranges, tous ces éléments définissent le style et la personnalité poétique de Fauré. Le beau sonore se déploie dans le temps et sollicite la mémoire qui doit reconstruire l'objet sonore dans le cerveau. Dans les systèmes esthétiques du XVIIIe et XIXe siècles la beauté sonore est toujours le produit de l'art, jamais de la nature. Musique et poésie sont des arts qui exigent une représentation : la poésie existe par la lecture, silencieuse ou à voix haute, et la musique, par l'exécution ; leur beauté se révèle dans la concrétisation de l'œuvre qui est à la base du processus de l'interprétation. Cette conception du beau est le fruit d'une civilisation de l'écriture où l'esthétique est fondée sur la présence d'un texte. Ce n'est qu'en marge du code éthico- esthétique que la beauté sonore peut être appréhendée avec la même immédiateté que la beauté visuelle : le plaisir sonore surgit en même temps que la sensation auditive ; il est indépendant de la forme, simple ou complexe, rationnel ou irrationnel, de la musique. Ainsi la perception esthétique, auditive, du sensible qu'il est transmis par l'interprète à l'auditeur, lui étant le premier à le percevoir, trouve la capacité du public qui apprécie par ses sens et ses goûts. Cette appréciation affective est purement individuelle et exprime une attitude esthétique qui donne la valeur de l'œuvre.

Les transformations technologiques depuis cinquante ans ont bouleversé la place de la musique dans la vie quotidienne. Celle-ci est actuellement omniprésente tout dans l'espace que dans les temps sociaux, et ses implications sociales ou culturelles sont si fortes qu'elles exigent d'être observées et analysées en tant que symptôme de la société. Le fait que la musique ne soit pas que partition, mais aussi exécution sonore publique, tout ce dispositif, cet appareil de célébration de l'œuvre au moment où elle est portée à la connaissance de public est tributaire de la situation du communication qui accompagne l'œuvre au moment où elle est transmise à l'auditeur. C'est Adorno qui a « le plus lutté » pour que la musique n'est pas une place « exotique » dans le champ sociologique, tout en ayant souligné quel doit mettre en évidence « ce qui est inhérent à la musique en soi en tant que sens social, et les positions et la fonction



qu'elle occupe dans la société. Le fait musical semble bénéficier d'une sorte de respect, comment à tous les faits de pensée et de création en général, de sorte qu'il resterait incompréhensible dans sa genèse et imprévisible dans son destin il est entouré d'un certain « mystère ». Par rapport au compositeur, au créateur, c'est le don qui surgirait, inattendue et inexplicable. Bref, c'est la théorie de l'inspiration, qui s'impose d'autant plus facilement qu'elle ne peut être liée ni à une intensité ni à une destination ; ou bien si une signification ou une finalité sont perçues, elles n'ont plus rien de commun avec une création humaine réelle.

Adorno dans « Théorie esthétique » en faisant une tentative de définition des concepts d'une sociologie de la musique, il souligne que le statut de la musique et du fait musical dans le monde contemporain est liée à la « dialectique de la raison » ainsi le monde échapperait en partie à la raison, ce qui lui permet d'être autonome tout en étant en même temps un fait social qui ne peut, en conséquence, échapper à certains aspects de la rationalisation. La musique a donc un caractère « ambigu » qui permet à Adorno d'abolir la barrière qui se trouve placée entre l'approche esthétique de l'œuvre d'art et l'approche strictement technique. Ces deux aspects lui paraissent inséparable et c'est pourquoi il faut aborder la musique par la rationalisation avec ses conséquences esthétiques et inversement comprendre en quoi le créateur apporte sa subjectivité dans les obligations de la technique. C'est ainsi que le concept de « force productive » inclut dans la composition, l'interprétation et la reproduction mécanique.

Le fait musical n'appartient exclusivement ni à l'ordre du réel ni à l'ordre du l'imaginaire, il a pris une dimension considérable dans la vie quotidienne (il vient parfois en tête des pratiques culturelles de certains groupes sociaux), ainsi il y a une autre dimension à prendre en considération et concerne la « communication immédiate ».

L'interprétation est le but final de tout travail instrumental, sa seule raison d'être. La technique n'est pas que le moyen d'arriver à cette fin, l'outil à mettre au service de l'interprétation artistique. Pour bien jouer, posséder l'appareil technique n'est donc pas suffisant. L'interprète doit aussi pleinement comprendre le sens de la musique, avoir de l'imagination créatrice et une approche sensible personnelle de l'œuvre si ce qu'il en fait ne doit pas rester sec et pédant. Sa personnalité ne doit être ni trop discrète ni trop voyante.

Pour savoir ce qu'il faut pour bien jouer en public, donc faire une bonne interprétation, le mieux est de se référer aux qualités nécessaires à un bon orateur, car ce sont quasiment les mêmes. Un bon orateur est ce lui qui a une bonne voix, une bonne élocution qui projette bien, qui a quelques choses d'important à dire et qui le dit avec autorité, de manière à être compris par tout le monde. De même, un bon interprète est celui qui allie une maîtrise technique complète et une interprétation compréhensible et convaincante pour tous. L'analogie va plus loin. Un orateur touchera rarement son auditoire si chaque mot, chaque inflexion et chaque geste donne l'impression d'être soigneusement étudié et préparé. Les mêmes mots impressionneraient bien plus s'ils semblaient venir à l'esprit de l'orateur où il les dit et si les intonations de sa voix, ses pauses, ses gestes et tout ce qui accompagne son discours semblaient spontanément engendrés par ce qu'il exprime. Tout cela est vrai aussi pour les musiciens. Les meilleures interprétations sont toujours proches de l'improvisation. L'artiste est si ému par la musique qu'il

joue qu'il oublie la technique et s'abandonne avec la liberté de l'improvisation à l'inspiration du moment. Une interprétation de cette nature est la seule qui puisse transmettre à l'auditeur l'essence de la musique, de manière aussi immédiate qu'une ré-creation.

D'autre part, l'interprète qui étudie à l'avance comment produire une certaine émotion en planifiant chaque oscillation du vibrato, en calculant mathématiquement chaque nuance, en agençant de manière précise chaque rubato pour ne jamais donner « la mauvaise impression d'improviser », substituée à une émotion authentique un sentiment artificiel, une fausse émotion mécaniquement produite. Le public dans son ensemble n'a sans doute pas une grande capacité d'analyser en la matière, mais il possède un instinct imparable pour ce qui est authentique et ce qui ne l'est pas. L'élément d'improvisation ne doit naturellement pas être trop poussé, et un interprète qui n'est pas techniquement et musicalement sûr doit se garder de se laisser submerger par ses émotions en jouant. L'improvisation doit donc rester dans le cadre d'une intention générale pour rendre justice aux éléments stylistiques et aux structures de l'œuvre que l'on joue. La liberté d'interprétation ne peut être fondée que sur une maîtrise technique complète des moyens d'expression.

### Esthétique. Éléments acoustiques en concert

La connaissance des lois acoustiques est très importante pour jouer en public. Si on parle à quelques personnes dans une petite salle, inutile d'élever la voix. Si l'élocution n'est pas des meilleurs et même si on parle trop vite, en général, on n'aura quand même aucune difficulté à se faire comprendre. Cependant, parler dans une grande salle pour quelques milliers de personnes est à l'évidence une toute autre affaire. Il faudra parler plus fort, plus lentement et plus clairement. C'est évident, et pour tant, il est étrange que si peu d'instrumentistes comprennent que ces mêmes principes s'appliquent à eux quand ils jouent en public. Beaucoup ne pensent un instant que ce qui est bon pour un salon ne l'est pas pour une salle de concert et vice-versa. Dans une salle, l'interprète doit projeter ce qu'il joue de manière à atteindre claire et compréhensible l'auditeur le plus éloigné. Il ne doit pas jouer pour les seuls auditeurs des premiers rangs, mais pour ceux qui sont en haut du balcon. Pour y parvenir, tout dépend de la taille et des qualités acoustiques de la salle. Si elle est petite et son acoustique est bonne, l'adaptation sera moindre. Plus elle sera grande, plus qu'il faudra faire attention aux facteurs acoustiques. Si la résonance de la salle est mâte, il faudra augmenter toute la dynamique. C'est à assez facile dans la douceur, mais quand il s'agit des fortes et des fortissimo, il faut avoir de la souplesse et savoir quand il faut changer sa façon de gouverner le son sans brusquer la sonorité. Tout dépend aussi de la nature de l'accompagnement. C'est plus facile avec le piano qu'avec l'orchestre. Si l'œuvre jouée est un concerto avec une lourde orchestration et si un chef peu attentif laisse les musiciens noyer le soliste, celui-ci est confronté à une tâche quasiment impossible. Quelques soient les circonstances, l'interprète doit avoir une oreille perspicace, la faculté de rectifier promptement et de s'adapter vite pour savoir pour quel douceur il peut ou avec quelle force il doit jouer pour qu'on l'entend dans un équilibre adéquat avec l'accompagnement. La vitesse sera aussi un facteur important et très variable. Les vitesses excessives, mieux vaut les éviter dans les grandes salles. C'est une obliga-

tion absolue dès qu'il y a le moindre effet d'écho, car toute vitesse excessive aura alors tendance à brouiller le son.

Cependant, remplir de son une salle n'est pas seulement une question de puissance mais relève davantage de la manière dont le son porte. Cela dépend en partie de la qualité de l'instrument mais plus de celle de la production du son. Mieux le son est produit, plus il ira loin. On ne doit pas forcer le son d'un instrument. La production du son sur les instruments à cordes ne concerne pas que le son continu. Il faut la compléter par l'alliance d'éléments percutants ou accentués qui donnent du caractère et un contour. Dans la musique instrumentale, le rapport entre ces éléments percutants est ceux de la ligne mélodique pure est le même que celui des consonnes et des voyelles dans la parole puis dans le chant. L'omniprésence des consonnes dans toutes les langues prouve qu'elles sont essentielles au langage. Ce principe doit être transposé dans la musique instrumentale où les sons percutants comme des consonnes sont souvent nécessaires pour donner une définition et forme plus claire aux sons voyelles de la ligne mélodique. Par exemple, au violon, le son voyelle correspond à la ligne mélodique parfaitement conduite avec un début sans heurte et une fin de même. Les consonnes (les éléments percutants ou accentués) fournissent l'articulation qui peut être produite, soit par la main droite soit par la main gauche. Avec la main de l'archet, la consonne sera toute attaque qui n'est pas sans heurte, comme le martelé, le détaché accentué, le spiccato. Avec la main gauche la consonne peut être produite en laissant tomber ou lever les doigts vite et énergiquement. En jouant de l'instrument ou chanter dans une grande salle, il faut savoir faire un bon équilibre entre voyelles et consonnes qui n'est pas le même surtout en concert où chaque son ou mot chanté doit être distinctement entendu et compris par tout le public. Parfois grâce à l'expérience des salles, les instrumentistes et les chanteurs semblent exagérer l'articulation des consonnes pour porter assez loin leur musique vers un auditeur éloigné.

La musique exerce un pouvoir de transcendance en signifiant par référence à un temps vécu propre à chacun. Ces perceptions peuvent opérer différemment pour chacun des esprits qui la reçoivent tout en conservant une unité et une universalité. La sémantique musicale, par essence abstraite, crée un monde bien particulier, qui est à la fois immanent à son matériau et transcendant au monde perçu par chacun. Les énoncés musicaux détiennent un « signifié » qui leur confère un potentiel à structurer l'œuvre suivant différents niveaux d'hierarchie. Le matériau musical se déduit de la représentation ; l'immanence de son expression est retenue pour en affecter l'émotion -au sens de mouvement de l'âme- à un donné musical transcendant.

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## L'ÉCLATEMENT DU RAPPORT: "IMAGINATION-SENSUALITÉ-ART" DANS L'ART CONTEMPORAIN

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L'analyse de cette intervention aura pour principal objet une délimitation possible de la signification de deux paramètres qui semblent au départ être supposés et pris en charge, lors de l'énoncé du sujet. Il y aura ensuite de notre part, des hypothèses de réponses ou, -des hypothèses de solutions. La question serait d'abord de savoir s'il existe effectivement une certaine forme de parenté (une éventuelle relation d'interaction réciproque ou une relation de consécution) entre la fonction de se donner un objet en image ce qui serait en principe du domaine de l'imaginaire, de l'expérience de l'imagination et de la perception des objets imaginés, et celle de la sensation plutôt matérielle, -presque tactile ou presque s'imaginant tactile-, liée alors absolument aux sens, à partir d'un acte réel ou à partir de l'expérience pratique -immédiate ou reconstruite plus tard- de relation à un objet: il y aurait ainsi une idée, un goût, une évocation de *sensation*, donnée en tant que l'expression de l'état du tempérament sensuel du sujet et traduite en termes personnels, subjectifs, -de sensualité. Il y aurait enfin, en troisième lieu, un objet presque *institutionnel* tel que l'art (et spécifiquement, dans notre intervention, les *arts visuels*), qui aurait été en quelque sorte la *concrétisation matérielle* et précise, une certaine synthèse et focalisation matérialisée, chaque fois différente selon les *artistes-sujets* concernés, de la manière dont se sont reliées, entre elles, l'*imagination* et la *sensualité*: de façon ainsi à ce que la première (l'*imagination*) en tant qu'activité spéculative, théorique, par l'intermédiaire de son enveloppement par les sens qui lui confèrent une expérience de matérialité, une apparence et une présence concrète (reliée chaque fois à tel ou tel objet précis), devienne matière, objet palpable et solide, institutionnel et instruit, -à savoir l'*art*, reconnu comme tel.

Voilà la manière dont nous avons reconstruit à notre sens les idées du sujet proposé, mais de toute façon selon une approche qui nullement n'exclut d'autres et dont par conséquent nous reconnaissons le caractère partiel et restreint. Cependant, la liaison, *imagination-sensualité-art*, indépendamment de la validité totale ou d'une validité seulement circonstancielle et partielle de ses portées théoriques, qui auraient été un des volets de la question, pose un problème d'histoire -un problème d'*origine*-, à savoir, comment se fait-il

qu'il y ait eu à un certain moment la conviction de ces liaisons qui sans doute, apparaissent presque évidentes en théorie sur le plan du raisonnement général à base de concepts, mais semblent moins efficaces à la lecture des faits ? Ainsi, la question qui est posée et semble avoir été un des maillons constitutifs de l'ensemble de ce sujet, est celle de délimiter s'il y aurait eu effectivement une *raison suffisante* qui aurait impérativement recouvert, justifié, les passages de l'un à l'autre terme, -à savoir, une implication quasi incontournable d'une définition suffisamment ou éventuellement aussi, insuffisamment instruite (ce qui est à démontrer), à une autre et de celle-là à la troisième (l'*art*), en tant que leur aboutissement le plus nécessaire et qui en plus, serait ainsi inévitable. Autrement dit, il n'y a aucune raison de croire que les choses se passent effectivement de cette façon, si la *raison suffisante* à démontrer (et qui n'est pas du tout initialement évidente), ne porte en elle-même une telle rigueur de démonstration au niveau du plan organisateur des raisonnements, qu'elle puisse comprendre aussi -qu'elle puisse instruire aussi- son éventuel démenti par les faits. Ainsi, la grande question serait en fait l'*art* (et non pas la relation de l'*imagination* à la *sensualité*), -mais l'*art* compris non plus en tant que l'aboutissement nécessaire d'un processus qui le génère, mais en tant que l'instance qui, inversement, mesure elle-même et révèle la portée effective quant à l'*art* lui-même de la fonction des deux autres, et la question serait donc de savoir si la conception de l'*art* -et surtout la conception de tel ou tel *art*- suppose effectivement qu'il y aurait eu auparavant *sensibilité* et *imagination* lors de la constitution originelle et l'installation de son sens artistique.

La question alors serait renversée: dans quelle mesure l'*art* suppose-t-il effectivement *imagination* et *sensualité* et qu'en est-il alors de leur absence lors des objets artistiques déjà reconnus comme tels, mais qui se refusent à se charger d'une activité ou d'une origine *sensualisée* et *imaginative* ? A notre sens la confusion vient du fait que l'*imagination* et la *sensualité* sont du domaine des qualités de toute forme d'expression du comportement humain dans son activité quotidienne et psychologique et que l'*art* est au contraire une *construction spécifique* (un *specific object* selon l'expression de Donald Judd<sup>1</sup>) dont le propre serait son *historicité* et par conséquent, les dépendances de ses apparitions successives de

la manière dont chaque fois son sens originel -sa constitution originelle-, cherchent à se reconstituer, à se retrouver, selon des conditions qui ne sont plus celles de l'origine, mais qui par contre sont le plus souvent contraignantes -même annulatriques- de la première intuition. Voilà où repose à notre sens le fond du problème de la question, à savoir, comment faire en sorte que *ce qui n'est pas le même, continue à se considérer lui-même en tant que le même* ou en d'autres termes, comment faire en sorte que le mouvement cyclique heideggerien (son *circulus vitiosus*), allant de l'œuvre d'art à l'art et de l'art à l'œuvre d'art, soit compatible avec toutes les transformations subies depuis à l'œuvre d'art et produites aussi par lui, tout le long de son histoire millénaire; mais qu'il soit compatible aussi aux conceptions correspondantes de l'art, lors de étapes historiques des différents aboutissements formels des images de l'art -ainsi que de la manière de ces images, de se constituer en images. Il est remarquable de voir comment l'approche ontologique de Martin Heidegger dans son "Origine de l'œuvre d'art"<sup>2</sup> de l'édition de 1950, se répercute sur les conceptions du peintre Américain Ad Reinhardt qui, dans son fameux article de 1962, "Art as Art", déclare que [...] *L'art en lui-même n'est rien d'autre que de l'art. L'art n'est pas ce qui n'est pas de l'art.* [...] <sup>4</sup> ainsi qu' à celles de l'artiste conceptuel new-yorkais Joseph Kosuth, dont les approches correspondantes dans son texte très connu de 1967 intitulé "Art after Philosophy",<sup>5</sup> soutiennent que [...] *ce que l'art a en commun avec la logique et les mathématiques, c'est qu'il est une tautologie; l' idée de l'art ("l'œuvre") et l'art sont une même chose, [...]*.

Le problème ainsi posé se présente pour nous sous un double aspect, très significatif. D'une part, il y aurait un sens *tautologique* de l'art qui proviendrait de la volonté d'insister à considérer, en tant que toujours *lui-même*, ce qui est en continue transformation (et qui alors aurait pu être aussi essentiellement *différent*, pourvu qu'on définisse le sens de cette *différence*) et d'autre part, il y aurait son *historicité*, à savoir les transformations évidentes de l'art, qui posent la question de la manière et de la portée de la validation chaque fois et à chaque étape historique, de son identification. Voilà où repose à notre sens la question liée à ce que l'art présente son *historicité*, sous forme du suivi, -du *continu*- des conditions conceptuelles, pratiques, techniques et matérielles quant à l'installation et l'exercice de son objet, mais liée aussi à ce que l'art présente son sens *tautologique*, sous forme de ruptures qui tout en rejetant son *historicité* conceptuelle, pratique, technique et matérielle, continuent à lui rendre aussi son identité d'origine, comme par une *nostalgie* de vouloir être toujours là, d'où il n'y aurait qu'une seule issue, qu'une seule possibilité, -celle de partir.

En quelque sorte cette origine, cette prédisposition à la continuité et -simultanément- à la multiplicité historique comprise en tant que *cerce vicieux* chez Heidegger, serait aussi une ouverture vers la multiplicité des idées sur l'art et par conséquent dans un sens inverse à l'esthétique du 18<sup>ème</sup> siècle qui instaurait la *déduction* de l'art à partir de la philosophie et instaurait ainsi, de façon systématique, la *pré-compréhension* de l'art. La situation par contre chez Heidegger serait celle de l'ouverture vers quelque chose qui ne saurait être "ni un seul" "ni un multiple", ni se déployant selon un corpus *pré-conçu*, ni instaurant un corpus

dont il en serait depuis le *modèle*, -mais de l'art, en tant que fondamentalement non *pré-compréhension* platonique de son essence, donc en tant qu'exclusivement perpétuel exercice de son expérience. Les deux approches qui résultent de notre analyse, sont les suivantes. Il y aurait d'abord, sur le plan technique de l'histoire de l'art -et précisément de l'histoire de l'art moderne- une question du *regard*, celui-là consistant à reconstruire l'expérience du monde selon un modèle de perception qui soumet l'expérience visuelle à la documentation d'une *forme* pré-conçue de raisonnement. Les analyses exhaustives d'Hubert Damisch dans son "Origine de la Perspective",<sup>6</sup> sur les systèmes de la représentation de la Renaissance et celles de Maurice Merleau-Ponty relativement à Cézanne dans "Sens et Non-Sens",<sup>7</sup> ainsi que celles de son livre posthume "Le Visible et l'Invisible"<sup>8</sup> relativement à une reconstitution inductive, non-géométrique de la perception de l'espace, étalent en quelque sorte, analysent, les problèmes formels résultant de la soumission de l'objet "*monde*" à la documentation pré-construite d'un système de représentation: ce dédoublement selon lequel il y aurait une *simulation* du monde par sa substitution picturale, ne saurait être indépendant aussi d'une distanciation par rapport au système "*renaissant*" de la part des *Romantiques* dont en fait, chez eux surtout, on reconnaît l'étendue de la prise en charge de l'expression. Disons que le problème serait le suivant: d'une part, celui de ramener le monde à la mesure de son image et par conséquent diminuer le monde, le *réduire*, à la dimension des conditions du regard et l'autre, celui de l'*emprise* sur le monde, (*éliminant* le monde), faisant du regard son propre objet.

Face à ces deux systèmes, l'un *Renaissant* et l'autre *Romantique*, se situe à notre sens le dilemme moderne qui consiste, soit à soumettre à partir surtout du 19<sup>ème</sup> siècle, la fonction artistique dans son ensemble, aux dispositions aléatoires de la notion littéraire -et de la sensation ou de l'état psychologique- du *tempérament* (une expression chère à Baudelaire), soit de faire le vide autour de la personnalité de l'artiste pour se fixer à la structure de l'objet. Cependant, la critique artistique de Baudelaire tout en étant orientée vers une subtilité analytique de reconstitution des sensations, prédispose à la situation intermédiaire et moderne qui consiste à considérer en tant qu'aléatoire, incertaine et mal exprimée, la *pré-compréhension* même, de l'art lui-même. Ainsi, la fameuse phrase de Baudelaire, [...] *Le beau est toujours bizarre*, [...] <sup>9</sup> dans son texte de 1855 intitulé, "*Méthode de critique de l'idée moderne du progrès appliquée aux Beaux Arts*", représente aussi bien l'ancrage de l'auteur sur le concept du *Beau* pris en tant que la fixation d'une définition non exprimée et hypothétique (mais se donnant pourtant sous forme de définition ouverte à toute présomption possible et future), que la prise de distance, en même temps, à toute conception définitive du *Beau* puisqu'il est *toujours bizarre*, ce qui lui enlèverait toute concordance éventuelle, par rapport aux conditions toujours en transformation, de l'environnement.

La situation de Baudelaire est à peu près celle de Cézanne, à savoir celle d'une situation de *compromis* entre une réalité extérieure qui se suffit et dont l'artiste aurait acceptée sa propre structure d'organisation à elle, lui appartenant, et la volonté en même temps "*expressive*" de l'artiste qui, lui, aurait voulu incorporer cette structure, mais

à la manière seulement de sa propre actuelle, *a priori*, forme d'organisation et méthode d'incorporation. Ainsi, l'ordre conceptuel de Cézanne – et notamment, la géométrisation de l'espace – sera facturé à celles des expériences du monde qui seules, effectivement, lui correspondent. D'autre part et de la même façon qu'historiquement parlant, "*Le doute de Cézanne*", selon l'expression de Merleau-Ponty, s'adresserait à la vision future d'une vue du monde périphérique en mouvement et en profondeur spatiale, mais fixée dans le présent en intégration – en condensé –, sur un même et unique plan plat, pictural aux dimensions prédéterminées, l'artiste actuel recherche aussi son client virtuel, personifié en musée futur de l'histoire des idées. En relation à ce Musée il lui prédispose déjà les conditions de travail réalisés dans le présent à l'intérieur d'un système d'art considéré actuellement nécessaire et impératif, mais qu'il relogue dans le futur. Ainsi le présent, même sous une forme sous-entendue, préconçue, en tant qu'esquisse seulement, en tant que vision d'une hypothèse de futur, sera déjà une prédétermination, – une *pré-compréhension* de l'art à faire – et de l'art à venir. Voilà comment fonctionne aujourd'hui le *cercle vicieux* de Heidegger, allant d'une volonté de sortir d'un système, par l'installation auparavant du système qui aidera à sortir de ce système: avec la différence que ce qui semble, chez Heidegger, constituer une *antinomie logique* (la *tautologie*), il ne sera pas pour lui un *défaut*, mais plutôt, une meilleure *compréhension*. Le système nécessaire serait l'*a priori* installé en anticipation à la théorie future de l'art, considérée en tant que nécessité découlant d'une mise en place dont les paramètres seraient définitifs, par la situation même, des conditions artistiques actuelles.

Il y a ainsi un paradoxe, à savoir, que la création, tout en étant en rupture relativement à l'*expression*, elle la soutient, par une projection dans le futur qui aurait déplacé, dans le temps, l'action du présent en tant que *projet présent* mais qui serait l'*oeuvre à venir* et dont l'artiste n'institue que, simplement, les prochaines conditions. Ce déplacement vers l'installation d'une *antériorité* du futur dont cette installation aurait été l'*origine*, altère la signification de l'*expression* en lui substituant les *conditions* mises en place en tant que la *future expression* ou la définition de l'*expression future* de l'art (et donc, faisant des conditions un "*cadre*" vide, oeuvre lui-même à remplir prochainement et définition de l'*oeuvre-conditions* à venir et ainsi de suite), de manière à ce que dans ce système, l'art et l'idée de l'art seraient une même chose. Cela a été très manifeste chez Kasimir Malevitch chez qui l'installation du *non-contenu* d'un mur noir, neutre et aveugle, ne saurait être que la *nostalgie* d'une antériorité et origine sans contenu, sans conditions, – finalité et limite elle-même originelle des conditions qui allaient surgir et dont elle aurait été l'ultime référence. Depuis, l'art du vingtième siècle joue en principe autour de ce tableau en inventant des limites, des dégradations, telles que l'*implosion* de l'artiste Français Daniel Dezeuze ou l'*entropie* de l'artiste Américain Robert Smithson et où, relativement à cette auto-analyse de l'oeuvre, un des premiers commentateurs serait le philosophe espagnol José Ortega y Gasset, ayant préconisé, autour de 1925, l'*auto-référentialité* de l'oeuvre artistique (dans son livre "*La déshumanisation de l'Art*"<sup>10</sup>), – déjà 35 ans environ avant l'article "*Art as Art*", de Ad Reinhardt.

L'idée de la dégradation sera le thème principal de l'exposition "*L'informe, mode d'emploi*"<sup>11</sup> réalisée en 1996 à Paris, au Centre Georges Pompidou, par Rosalind Krauss et Yve-Alain Bois, sur le principe d'une histoire *non-formelle* de l'art et où les dogmes de la pure *opticalité* du champs visuel et de la *planéité* de la surface de Clement Greenberg, seraient contestés, face au *déclassement* et le *rabaissement* préconisés par le terme de l'*informe*, formulé par Georges Bataille en 1929. Par ailleurs, les idées que l'*horizontalité*, le *battement*, le *bas matérialisme* et l'*entropie*, seraient des sections d'une analyse *non-formelle*, *non-mécanique* et *non-continue* de l'art, auront été formulées à cette exposition, à la suite déjà de certaines observations très pertinentes, l'une de Rosalind Krauss, dans un article de 1972, essentiel aujourd'hui pour la bibliographie contemporaine ("*Un point de vue sur le modernisme*"<sup>12</sup>) et l'autre, de Yve-Alain Bois dans un article de 1976, intitulé "*Malevitch, le carré, le degré zéro*"<sup>13</sup>. Dans le premier, la professeur Américaine préconisait la description d'une série des pièces alignées l'une après l'autre et dont chaque artiste en les traversant, fermerait la porte derrière lui tout en ouvrant la porte de l'autre pièce, en face, qui s'annonçait au présent. Elle décrivait ainsi, en rapport au mouvement expressionniste *analytique*, la conception mécaniste d'un développement irréversible de l'art contemporain où, aucune de ces pièces en enfilade n'étant pas conçue pour le mouvement inverse – à savoir, pour le retour en arrière –, il n'y aurait d'autre issue que la seule fuite en avant et, – nous ajoutons – à l'image du développement irréversible et continu que proclamaient à grands coups d'optimisme au début des années 1960, les organismes économiques intergouvernementaux.

L'autre observation, celle de Yve-Alain Bois, allait porter une nuance de différenciation quant à la conviction d'une *planéité* idéale de la surface picturale – c'est à dire de la surface en tant que *non-lieu* –, faisant remarquer que [...] : la *frontalité* "*n'existe*" pas, l'*oeil* toujours, *habitude culturelle* peut-être, ou *conditions physiologiques*, *creuse*. [...] <sup>14</sup>. La surface serait ainsi réelle et concrète, la matière palpable, un objet déterminé selon l'action artistique et selon chaque action, d'une façon ou d'une autre. Face à ce système actuel de la formation et de la définition de l'art, il y a deux orientations qui se présentent. L'une, aura été la dislocation et l'éclatement d'une suite et de la conséquence de la manière de construire les formes, à partir de l'enseignement de la peinture. De cette façon, il y a plutôt des difficultés à faire insérer la *sensualité* de l'*imagination* dans un programme d'installation des conditions du futur, telles que les conditions de l'*aménagement de la nature*, du *paysage urbain*, de la *reproductibilité mécanique* et de l'*usage du corps*. Les oeuvres seraient alors par définition virtuelles et cette installation des conditions du futur (et des conditions de la théorie *muséale* du futur), n'aura pas été sans incidences sur le reste de la conception artistique, d'une manière relative à celle que préconisait de façon tout à fait décisive Walter Benjamin dès 1939, lorsqu'il renversait les conditions du problème. [...] On s'est dépensé [...] écrivait-t-il [...] en vaines subtilités pour décider si la photographie était ou non un art, mais on ne s'était pas demandé d'abord si cette invention même ne transformait pas le caractère général de l'art. [...] <sup>15</sup>

Ce que Benjamin préconisait clairement au delà de la photographie, dans son texte fondamental ("*L'oeuvre d'art à l'époque de sa reproductibilité technique*"), était la valeur méthodologique de l'induction dans l'art contemporain où il n'y aurait plus à faire déduire, d'un ensemble de concepts préétablis, le jugement des qualités de l'action artistique, mais inversement, il y aurait à définir, par l'action artistique, la qualité des jugements des concepts. Dans ce même texte il s'agissait aussi de l'autre face, d'une autre version de ce que Adorno soutenait dans son "*Aesthetic Theory*",<sup>16</sup> relativement à la *non-réductibilité* du sens de l'oeuvre artistique aux définitions extérieures à son organisation interne. Surtout c'est chez Heidegger que nous retrouvons, à travers son concept de la *choséité*, la conception moderne de la forme, non plus en tant que dissociée, différente de son support matériel et supposée être posée sur lui, mais en tant que la nécessité de la matière, relativement chaque fois à son emploi, de se rendre conforme à la configuration formelle adéquate. Par ailleurs, la conception chez Heidegger de l'unité (du rapprochement efficace) de la forme et de la matière, ne semble pas être indépendante de l'antécédence d'une petite phrase, extrêmement essentielle de Parménide, le philosophe grec du sixième siècle avant notre ère, dont le fameux poème comportait un vers significatif: "*être et comprendre c'est la même chose*" ou "*το γὰρ αὐτό νοεῖν ἐστί τι καὶ εἶναι*".

A cet effet nous allons proposer deux observations. L'une sera liée à une petite phrase presque anodine de Braque, lors d'une entrevue à Dora Vallier au milieu des années 1950 et où, se référant à la peinture cubiste *analytique* des années 1908-1909, le peintre expliquait que ce qui les intéressait, à l'époque, Picasso et lui, était le "*ton local*", à savoir, le ton qui fonctionne à côté des autres, mais en même temps aussi, de façon indépendante par rapport aux autres, sans retombées donc sur le *ton* des structures avoisinantes, -par conséquent, sans retombées aussi sur les structures voisines elles-mêmes. Il s'instaurait par là un système de *juxtapositions* qui, n'ayant pas des limites imposées par les définitions des conditions du cadre, annulait les fonctions picturales traditionnelles de la périphérie et du centre. Mondrian a su imposer le système *juxtapositionnel* lors des "*Boogie-Woogie*" et depuis, ce système a fait éclater tout aussi bien les structures de la constitution des tableaux, jusqu'aux interventions dans l'espace géographique naturel et l'espace bâti. Cela était très évident à partir des années 1950, avec les travaux à même le sol et sans limites préconçues du cadre chez Pollock (exposé également à même le sol, lors de l'exposition de Rosalind Krauss et de Yve-Alain Bois à Paris), -mais aussi en architecture, dont les systèmes opérationnels de l'architecte Français Yona Friedman et de l'architecte Américain, Christopher Alexander, représentent des exemples très ponctuels quant à l'emploi fonctionnel et conceptuel de la *juxtaposition*: le premier, ayant constitué un répertoire par graphes de quelques millions de possibilités d'aménagement des logements<sup>17</sup> et le second, établissant un *pattern language*<sup>18</sup> qui consiste à concevoir un arrangement fondamental d'une configuration comportant trois parties distinctes dont la première serait le *contexte* (les *conditions de la forme*), la seconde, la *solution* (et qui serait la *forme correspondant aux nécessités des conditions*) et la troisième, le *problème*, à savoir la *prise en considération des conflits découlant de la relation des conditions aux solutions*.

Voilà quelle est aujourd'hui une situation presque incontournable selon laquelle, il y aurait eu un éclatement des relations. Empiriquement parlant il y a ainsi autant de systèmes de transfert de la *forme* à l'*idée* et vice versa, que des oeuvres et des artistes. D'autre part le rêve de l'histoire, à partir de Hegel, serait l'homogénéisation du système. Le problème ne serait donc pas le transfert lui-même, mais la constitution du *système à réaliser le transfert*. En tant qu'historiens ou philosophes -ou même en tant que simples regardeurs des choses- nous sommes en présence d'idées variées des artistes qui plus ou moins se suivent et se revêtent chaque fois, en évoluant ou en se remplaçant l'une l'autre, des formes spéciales appelées par Donald Judd, "*objets spécifiques*". La question est de savoir s'il y aurait eu des continuités entre ces formes spéciales de l'une à l'autre ou si au contraire il y aurait eu des *localités*, -des "*dits locaux*", des "*récits locaux*", qui s'épuisent chaque fois en même temps que leur mise en place et expression directe ? Face à l'observation de Braque vers le milieu des années 1950 concernant le *ton local*, une autre observation de Frank Stella et de Donald Judd, dix ans après, vers le milieu des années 1960, dans une entrevue à Bruce Glazer,<sup>19</sup> confirmait que "*les parties sont non-relationnelles*". Il s'agissait d'une attitude correspondante à celle de Braque relative à la non-ingérence des *parties* aux autres *parties* ou relative à la disparité des *parties*, -en même temps cependant, que le même Judd déclarait aussi, que "*le grand problème est de préserver le sens du tout*", -et il sous entendait, "*de l'ensemble*".

Ainsi, face à l'éclatement, la position artistique serait de préserver un autre type de relation qui établirait l'unité entre-elles des parties *non-relationnelles* et celle là, en quelque sorte, serait la question fondamentale puisque la *non relation* établit la rupture, -face à l'avenir et face à la situation de l'*après* de la forme- un avenir qui se présenterait donc en tant que l'ajournement face au présent, et en tant que le renvoi des disparités vers une réunification centripète, hypothétique, -mais surtout une réunification prochaine. Il y aurait ainsi un nouveau *a priori*, à la manière des anciens systèmes, installé en anticipation à la théorie future de l'art, instituant le déplacement vers le futur des disparités actuelles ou évoquant une *nostalgie* de l'originel, -mais *nostalgie* du futur. A l'image du dix huitième siècle français qui se réjouissait de constater que les anciens lui ressemblaient (et plus précisément, les Grecs), nous nous réjouissons aujourd'hui de ressembler à un futur que nous avons nous mêmes installés, en anticipant de façon conquérante aux idées à venir. Le *post-modernisme* serait notre succession que nous avons nous mêmes installés, pour préserver nos assises actuelles.

Dans un texte prophétique, écrit en 1979 et publié en France, en 1981 aux éditions Balland, sous le titre, "*L'histoire de l'art est terminée*",<sup>20</sup> le peintre Français Hervé Fischer qui serait probablement le premier à avoir manifesté une approche systématique à ce sujet relativement à la fin de l'art, avait établi le rapport entre la création du concept explicite de l'histoire de l'art au 19ème siècle et la manifestation des avant-gardes au 20ème, -en tant que volontés pour créer l'histoire. Plusieurs auteurs après Fischer, tels que Hans Belting publié en 1983 et Arthur Danto en 1992, traitèrent à peu près la même situation: dans quelle mesure en effet y aura-t-il des artistes qui informeront sur le *non possible* de

l'art, sur le *vide*, établi en définitive par la *non-relation* ? D'autre part il est tout à fait évident que les anciennes connotations entraînées par une approche plutôt descriptive de l'art (telle que l'*imagination* ou la *sensualité*), n'ont plus de prise dans un monde de l'art exclusif de son désir de se conformer à un programme du futur, dont il aurait fait le support de sa propre survie au présent. Le texte de Fischer est assez explicite concluant exactement sur une attitude qui provient d'une démystification du futur. Il écrit: "*Ce qui est terminé c'est l'histoire de l'art en tant que nouveauté*".<sup>21</sup>

## (ENDNOTES)

<sup>1</sup> Donald Judd, "Specific Objects", *Arts Yearbook* 8, 1964 et *Regards sur l'Art Américain des années soixante*, Editions Territoires, 1979, Paris, p. 65-72.

<sup>2</sup> Heidegger, Martin, *Der Ursprung des Kunstwerkes*, première édition, Frankfurt, 1950.

<sup>3</sup> Ad Reinhardt, "Art-as-Art", *Art International*, Lugano, VI, no 10, Dec. 1962, p. 36-37 et Ad Reinhardt, *Cat.*, Ministère des Affaires Culturelles, Centre National d'Art Contemporain, 1973, Paris, p. 45-46. ([...] *Art as Art is nothing but art. Art is not what is not art.* [...]).

<sup>4</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>5</sup> Joseph Kosuth, "Art after Philosophy", *Studio International*, Oct. 1969.

<sup>6</sup> Damisch, Hubert, *L'origine de la perspective*, Flammarion, 1987 Paris.

<sup>7</sup> Merleau-Ponty, Maurice, *Sens et non-sens*, nrf, éditions Gallimard, 1996, Paris, p. 13-33, première édition 1966.

<sup>8</sup> Merleau-Ponty, Maurice, *Le Visible et l'Invisible*, Tel Gallimard, 1986, Paris, première édition 1964, Paris.

<sup>9</sup> Baudelaire, Charles, *Écrits sur l'art, I*, Le livre de Poche, éditions Gallimard, 1971, Paris, p. 378.

<sup>10</sup> Ortega y Gasset, José, *The Dehumanization of Art*, Princeton University Press, 1968.

<sup>11</sup> Yve-Alain Bois, Rosalind Krauss, *L'informe mode d'emploi*, Centre Georges Pompidou, 1996, Paris, *Cat.*

<sup>12</sup> Rosalind Krauss, "A View of Modernism", in *Artforum*, Vol. XI, No 1, Sept. 1972, p. 50 et in *Regards sur l'Art Américain des années soixante*, ("Un point de vue sur le modernisme"), Editions Territoires, 1979, Paris, traduit par Claude Gintz, p. 106.

<sup>13</sup> Yve-Alain Bois, "Malevitch, le carré, le degré zéro", in *Macula*, No 1, deuxième trimestre 1976, p. 28-49.

<sup>14</sup> *Ibid.* p. 41.

<sup>15</sup> Benjamin, Walter, *Oeuvres III*, folio essais Gallimard, 2000, Paris, p. 287.

<sup>16</sup> Adorno, Th. W., *Aesthetic Theory*, Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1997.

<sup>17</sup> Friedman, Yona, *Pour une Architecture Scientifique*, Pierre Belfond, 1971, Paris.

<sup>18</sup> Arnold, Madeleine, *Les modèles chez Alexander*, École Nationale Supérieure des Beaux Arts, 1977, Paris, p. 151.

<sup>19</sup> Bruce Glaser, "Questions à Stella et Judd", in *Regards sur...* *op.cit.*, p. 53-63, première édition WBAI-FM, février 1964.

<sup>20</sup> Fischer, Hervé, *L'Histoire de l'Art est terminée*, Balland, 1981, Paris.

<sup>21</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 106.

## AESTHETICS OF THE MEDITERRANEAN LANDSCAPE

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The observing of the landscape has inspired many writers and painters to immerse themselves in a vision that amalgamates the world of reality with that of dreams. Daybreak or dusk, the alternation of day and night as well as the cycle of the seasons, have promoted a visionary sense of time and place. In the splendour of the eternal flux of all things, a thought offered by Heraclitus comes to mind: "Those awake share a common world but those asleep withdraw into their own private world" (14, A 99). This idea is echoed in another of this ancient philosopher's statements, namely: "The sleeping are the artificers of things that occur in the world and they are instrumental in their production" (14, A 98). The external and the interior worlds collide and the intervention of the senses involves the dynamism of reason in a continuing process of exchange between the real and the ideal.

We should also include mirages in the category of reality and dream. Is Hölderlin's Greece, in *Hyperion*, not a mirage? And what about the gardens of Locrinoö in the *Odyssey* (Book VII), the enchanted places of Alcornoque, or the woods evoked by Racine? Mirages are definitely images.

The question arises as to whether or not there exists or could exist an aesthetics of the landscape and, if so, when it might have come into existence. Certainly, the question must be examined in relation to a feeling and a judgement of taste that have as their object nature, sensory experience, artifice, imitation, imagination, ethics, and freedom. We are dealing with a network of relations underpinned by a "critique of the gaze."

The aesthetic experience that we achieve in nature through the perception of the landscape is completely perturbed in the postmodern age. Natural beauty exists in the Mediterranean area as an outcome of myth, culture and history. And this is what we have to safeguard as far as technological changes are concerned. In this way the quality of the identity of the places to be preserved and protected is not lost.

Where does the image of the natural landscape come from? When we talk about nature we mean all those things that surround us and that are laden with human, cultural and historical values, as has always been stated. Simmel observed that the configuration of the world after the Middle Ages, upon the decline of symbolic thinking, for the first time disclosed to us the landscape of nature. It comes as no surprise, therefore, that in the Middle Ages or in an-

cient times it was not possible to seize the meaning of landscape, in the sense of the significance of details linked to one's state of mind. Indeed, it was not until the 15<sup>th</sup> - 16<sup>th</sup> centuries that the formal independence of the spiritual act of landscape was translated into landscape painting. Furthermore, Simmel claimed that it was only recently that aesthetic form had succeeded in finding richness and reconciliation in the landscape in relation to nature; whereas, the latest developments of society, technology and morality had caused a rupture in human culture. Landscape remains inextricably linked to nature, to its unity and wholeness, in spite of its restricted focus on the individual perspective. When we observe and admire a landscape, there is a shift towards an enhancement and purification of the process through which landscape is perceived as a work of art, beyond its relationship with painting. In a similar fashion to artists, albeit to a lesser extent, observers act and eliminate the immediately given, chaotic and boundless world to enhance all this as a self-sufficient meaningful unity, first by taking a distance from the world but then rejoining it. Simmel goes on to say that art derives from life, from the existing phenomena which lend form to things. In his view, a landscape should no longer be regarded as a sum of individual natural objects, but as a work of art at its inception. Given this concept and perspective, the act of vision coalesces with the act of feeling. The unity of the various elements revolves around the *Stimmung* principle of landscape. *Stimmung*, being a psychic process, is a property of landscape itself, which means that the landscape has already been transformed into a spiritual form. The unitary representation of the object and the feeling that accompanies it blend together: landscape is nature that reveals itself aesthetically. This is equally applicable to Simmel. But the concept of natural landscape needs to be re-interpreted in the light of history, anthropology and culture.

The sight of a beautiful landscape has always fascinated us but our judgement of it changes together with the language we use to describe it. But, according to Pier Paolo Pasolini, reality around us is an archaic, mythic and sacred idiom, a harbinger of hidden truth. There is a *quid* that transcends the comprehension of man.

What comes to mind when we think of the aesthetics of landscape? Clearly, we think of a feeling and a judgement of taste related to nature, ethics, freedom, the artificial, imitation, the imagination and sensory experience. At the same time this map of relations is informed by reflections on what is ancient and what is modern, on what appears to be lasting and what proves to



be improvised or ephemeral, but it is also informed by the meaning of human work from the garden to cultivated land, as well as a criticism of the observing eye: is it the individual that activates the beauty of the things around us, or do these things reveal their beauty independently of the individual? In the 18<sup>th</sup> century all these themes constituted a systematic intermingling within which a categorical spectrum of taste was found: beauty, grace, the sublime, the picturesque, the *je ne sais quo*, the neo-gothic. These complex ideas together with the great hystorico-stylistic models such as the classical, baroque, rococo, and romantic were closely connected with the reception of landscape and the sentiment of nature. Every landscape in fact belongs to man, his activity, his freedom, and his being a maker who creates, modifies, constructs and transforms by means of art and technique. We know that a work of art, as distinct from a natural effect, is the work of man. However, landscape too can itself be considered the result of art, the effect of man's doing, acting and feeling through freedom. Landscape is a manifestation of human freedom in nature, as J. Ritter has stated (1963) or, as Simmel argued in 1913: "Landscape is nature that reveals itself aesthetically".

In the middle of the 20<sup>th</sup> century Martin Schwind (1950) observed that landscape could be considered as the art of a people, and as the expression of its culture and spirit. A comparison may be drawn with a work of art produced by a single man or community, but in a more complex manner. This consideration is useful also for the Mediterranean area as the result of continuous cultural interactions between different peoples over the centuries. We have witnessed different modifications of the sites, together with numerous transformations of the forms of representation of nature. An important exchange between tradition and innovation is visible, thus the landscape appears as an interethnic and transcultural result. When we speak of an aesthetics of landscape, we mean the different beauties of the territory, and we refer to a possible work of art.

The landscape is a work of art, for it is the object of man's work and skill; at the same time its arrangement appears as a natural product of forms. The things around us live on man's feeling. We perceive, imagine and shape at the same time. During the act of enjoyment and contemplation, we become artists who perceive the landscape as an aesthetic experience. Thus the aesthetics of landscape *per se* cannot be neglected in the analysis of movement viewed as one of the qualifying aspects of nature, the artist of the cosmos, together with man, the artist of feeling. The landscape in fact presents itself according to mutable events shaped by the seasons, meteorological elements, winds and the action of the elements: earth, water, air and fire. Nature is the creator of mutable events.

Moreover, any parcel of land can become an archaeological site for our contemplative spirit. This is true inasmuch as the spirit of contemplation allows us to perceive and search for the hidden presence of history and culture, to discover enduring evidence of the ineffable beauty of the forests, fields and rock formations. In this sense, human beings create the world, we are demiurges; originally, we were farmers and gardeners. In the Hebrew Bible humanity is the custodian of the house of God and protector of his lands.

A place may have many different aspects and meanings. In *Metaphysics* (III, 2, 1003a, 33-35), we find that "being is spoken of in many senses, but all are in relation to one single term and a specific nature for all of these." These words lend support to my personal view that, even when there are no words to describe it, landscape can still exist in a sensibility capable of conveying its sense and value.

The Greeks had no word for landscape, opting instead for a variety of expressions and terms that revealed a profound love of

nature and the "spirit of the place". In Homer a perception of the beauty of the landscape (*Homeric Hymns*, III, 225-228) transpires and the idea that a place could be thought of as space from which to observe the surrounding scenery (*Odyssey*, X, 146-147; 97-98). A recent form of representation, landscape is an ancient idea pertaining to the feeling of wonder awakened by meditation.

Plutarch shows us that nature is alive when Pan is alive; the screeching owl is Athena, the mollusc on the shore is Aphrodite; the gods inhabit their biological forms. However, he also notices a change: crags, thickets and localities also become symbols. In the mental representation of the ancients, we find a mixture of religion and nature, as Strabo also makes clear.

The dialectical relationship between the ancient and the modern always re-emerges, although it is being threatened by globalisation: the beautiful in nature arouses the feeling of something that is forever rooted in the past, of a loss that modern humankind has replaced with feeling and idealisation. In antiquity every place was the kingdom of a god. Every site was the object of a cult or memorial operating through the layers of successive cultures. Caves, trees, shore lines and rocks were the sites of oracles. Myths and legends provide us with the framework for such a fusion by describing places enchanted by an aura of mystery.

The ancient places of worship were selected on the basis of their geological features as well as that indefinable something; these were sites dear to the gods where they could build their terrestrial homes. Thus Apollo, an oracle associated with the beauty of the sun, is plentiful in allusions and mysteries that make his shrines powerful and attractive. This is also true of the myths of the "great mother," with her physical attributes: oaks, springs, caverns and grottoes.

There are various examples of ancient memory (history, literature, representation), in other words, a particular description and illustration of sites. I have already spoken about the cult of sites to which we can add Homer's narration of the island of Ogygia, the abode of the nymph Calypso, or Sappho's "garden of Aphrodite" with its fascinating synesthesia, in which different perceptions and feelings of water, wind, perfume, form, colour are interlaced, to help us to conjure up an image of the ancient Mediterranean area. We witness the epiphany of nature: the wonderful scenery of the landscape connected with myth. At the same time we can observe the mutation of the environment produced by human communities and civilisation, from the Age of the Sahara graffiti and rock paintings (for example Lybia: Fozzigiaren and Sughtd) to the present. A continuous metamorphosis of cultures, economies, cultivated land and vegetation can be seen. According to Fernand Braudel (*La Méditerranée*, Paris, 1985; *Les Mémoires de la Méditerranée*, 1988 and 2002), this area is not only a geographical and historical reality, but also an ethical and aesthetic reality. We can say, as Martin Schwind (1950) did, that our landscape is a "cultural landscape" in which traditions and innovations are to be found.

These arguments allow us to analyse the sentiment of nature: the Mediterranean evokes the very spirit of the landscape contemplated as a vision, an illusion, a dream. It inspires nostalgia for an archetypal nature. An example of this may be found in Th. Gautier (1856, *Paul d'Aspremont*) who describes a Mediterranean landscape as a miraculously untouched environment conveying an impression of timelessness. However, most of the plants illustrated in this short story did not exist in ancient times. The image of the Mediterranean landscape admired as a product of "natura naturans" is, on the contrary, an image of "natura naturata". At the end of the 1980's M. Dufrenne interpreted the two concepts in the light of a new anthropology.

On the basis of the theory of landscape examined above, experience indicates that an environment that provides us with aesthetic satisfaction is also a healthy and sound environment to live in. We may start from this contradiction to consider nature as the result of culture and history, namely, as the natural and/or urban landscape. In this case, we view it from a phenomenological and relational aesthetic perspective, thus going beyond the limits of a merely objective or subjective definition of natural beauty—which is indeed so varied and diverse. This vantage point becomes even more effective when analysing the dynamics of environmental change, in other words, when we realise that a natural landscape image—i.e. a landscape made up of “places” (those places that identify memory and cult)—is today mixed up with another type of landscape, which instead appears to be made up of “non-places”. The phenomenological perspective proves to be helpful in the understanding of the intersection and transformation of places and non-places. This is the world of globalisation.

The development of the contemporary context must be read and interpreted so as to take into account both the transformation of places and the tragedy or agony that nature itself is confronted with, caused by environmental disasters, or hydro-geological damage provoked mainly by man. While the tragedy of nature occurs in certain places, at the same time, somewhere else, nature conservation projects are enacted. As a matter of fact, two diametrically opposed forces are at play: on the one hand, destructive forces (wars, natural disasters) and, on the other, the reshaping of constructive forces (landscape architecture, restoration of cities, etc.). This may seem paradoxical but it is true: violence and aggressiveness on the one hand, peace and harmony on the other. Yet destruction today only leads to ruins and debris, being totally insensitive to memory and time. There are no extant ruins that bring to mind an illusion of eternity or that are evocative of a melancholic or nostalgic aura, as might have been the case in the 18<sup>th</sup> century. They are simply the remains of an outburst of violence to be eliminated and an empty space to be filled in. The point of contact between places and “non-places” is characterised by suffering and atrocity, a fit of destruction that derives from war, terrorism and speculation.

I would submit that the idea of nature is to be regarded as a natural and cultural landscape; as the result of man-made action, work and imagination; as a mental and psychological state. That is why destroying a landscape means seriously affecting the very core of the historical and human community. For this reason we should think of the Mediterranean as a variably composed identity, aiming at a hypothesis of preservation, focusing the principles of the civilisation founded on memory, tradition and intercultural and transcultural exchanges.

## Conclusion

The distinction between a natural object and an artificial one brings up another issue. The natural object can give rise to interpretative distortions if it is understood as a metaphor for nature and, therefore, as something artificial. It might be preferable to set up an opposition between nature and artifice wherein humankind functions as mediator or artificer, on the one hand, and viewer or reader, on the other. By means of such an opposition, we realise a dream, as in the case of Justus Lipsius's Heverlea (Belgium) an example of a site designed roughly in the 1600s, to include a garden, a landscape, and a city near Lovanium. However, we can also discover the feeling of places seen only by the imagination, such as Avalon or the island of Torre Vermiglia. Thus, we can say

that the landscape, whether real or imaginary, is the wonder of the truthful gaze, the mind, and the heart. Humanity and history produce it in a geography of cults, myths, and divinities. In such a context nature—whether spontaneous artificer or man-made material—is no longer divided into two or three natures according to the intervention of humans and the principle of imitation; it is one. Erasmus of Rotterdam (*Convivium religiosum*) reminds us of the eloquence of nature and of its teachings. In the text cited here, the principal interlocutor, Eusebius, had painted images of nature on the walls of the ambulatory around the garden of his cloister—images that he would contemplate in reality in that very garden. In such a juxtaposition of forms, real flowers and painted flowers, nature as artificer and the artistic genius of humankind competed to engender a pleasure derived from the object and its representation. Here we have achieved the variety of the one and same nature whose genius is infused in everything.

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## SENSUALITÉ ET PORNOGRAPHIE DANS L'EMPIRE DES SENS DE NAGISA OSHIMA

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Nagisa Oshima est un cinéaste japonais avec une longue carrière sur le cinéma politique. Après une vingtaine de longs métrages sur la guerre, Corée, la démocratie, le Japon et les Japonais, voici qu'il succombe à la proposition d'un producteur français de tourner un film porno. Il s'agit évidemment de *L'Empire des sens*, en japonais *Ai no Corrida* : La Corrida de l'amour (1976). A vrai dire, le sexe a fait progressivement son apparition « intense et violente » (Oshima, 1980b, 308) dans beaucoup de ses films antérieurs. Mais c'est surtout depuis le film *Les Plaisirs* qu'il sent le besoin de parvenir à une expression radicale de la sexualité : faire un porno est pour lui de briser le tabou qui lui était imposé jusqu'alors. (Oshima, 1980b, 317) De toute façon, ambition de tout mettre en scène est, selon lui, de filmer l'être humain sans limites, c'est-à-dire de le filmer en train de mourir et en train d'avoir des rapports sexuels. (Oshima, 1980b, 313) Grâce à *L'empire des sens*, Oshima devient mondialement connu. Le film a un énorme succès mais il soulève une vive controverse – même une bataille juridique qui dure 6 ans : s'agit-il de l'art ou de l'obscénité? La démonstration en gros plans des organes génitaux ainsi que de l'acte sexuel le place indubitablement très proche de la pornographie, mais, en même temps, la sensualité qui émane de ses scènes<sup>1</sup> nous oblige d'admettre son grand art. Pourtant, sensualité et pornographie se contredisent : la pornographie neutralise l'imagination alors que la sensualité l'éveille. Si nous définissons la pornographie comme la stagnation, le recul de l'imagination – puisque l'activité sexuelle est montrée en ses moindres détails –, comment définir la sensualité ?

Tandis que le porno a explicitement comme but de provoquer une excitation sexuelle immédiate, le sensuel se trouve à ses antipodes : fermé sur lui-même, c'est ce qui éveille les sens – la plus part du temps sans intention de le faire – en provoquant des sentiments érotiques. Peut-on supposer que le sensuel fait bien appel aux sens mais en même temps contient quelque chose d'inaccompli ? C'est de cette façon alors que la sensualité éveille-

t-elle l'imagination ? La femme sensuelle se donne au regard et en même temps se retire... Peut-on définir la sensualité comme le lancement d'une promesse laissée en suspens ?

Il n'y a pas de doute que *L'empire des sens* est l'endroit propice pour chercher la réponse. Il a comme point de départ un fait divers, c'est Oshima lui-même qui a écrit le scénario. L'histoire est à peu près connue. Nous sommes à Tokyo, en 1936. Un maître de maison, Kichi, s'éprend avec une de ses servantes, Sada, ancienne geisha. Très vite ils sont liés par une passion charnelle très forte qu'ils les poussent à quitter la maison de Kichi, puisqu'il est marié, et à planer et trouver refuge dans diverses auberges. Toute la journée ils ne font que faire l'amour – tout est filmé de très près –, même devant les autres. Sada est toujours jalouse de sa femme, elle commence à le menacer d'un couteau, ils font l'amour même avec le couteau dans la bouche de Sada. Une autre fois, elle simule la strangulation de son amant afin d'augmenter son plaisir à elle. (C'est connu que lors de la strangulation d'un homme il y a une stimulation immédiate.) Elle le laisse vivre, elle finit par le stranguler réellement avec son consentement total. Par la suite, elle lui coupe les organes génitaux et se promène heureuse pendant 4 jours dans les rues de Tokyo en les gardant dans ses mains. Elle est arrêtée et enfermée en 6 ans de réclusion. (Elle a été considérée comme victime de sa victime, victime d'un « homme libidineux ». Selon Oshima, son film est fait précisément « contre l'image d'Abe Sada que forgea le pouvoir » en dévoilant son vrai visage.) (Oshima, 1980a, 11)

Justement nous avons omis de préciser que quand Oshima décide de tourner un porno, il choisit de mettre en scène un crime. « Le sexe et le crime ont un point commun en ce sens qu'ils sont les impulsions les plus violentes qu'il y ait dans l'être humain. » (Oshima, 1969, 53) La mort en général et le crime en particulier jouent un rôle primordial dans la vie et l'œuvre d'Oshima. « Dès mon enfance, la mort a toujours été pour moi quelque chose de familier. A l'âge de trois ans je perdais ma grand-mère, à six ans mon père et à sept mon grand-père maternel qui nous avait recueillis, ma mère et moi. Donc excepte ma mère, tous mes parents directs avaient disparu. » (Oshima, 1978, 13) « C'est plus la non-existence de mon père que l'existence de ma mère qui déterminera mon propre mode d'existence ». (Oshima, 1980b, 235) Depuis lors, une aspiration au suicide l'accompagne tout au long de sa vie et « rend [...] »

<sup>1</sup> Il paraît qu'Oshima s'est inspiré de Utamaro et Hokusai, les grands graveurs japonais qui « ont représenté mille et mille fois le visage de la femme embellie par l'extase sexuelle, transfiguré par la vague de fond de plaisir, exalté par l'orgasme. [...] On dirait [...] qu'Oshima s'est consciemment servi de ces splendides aquarelles et gravures sur bois, car la surabondance de gros plans de visages, dans son film, ne cesse de rappeler la beauté des estampes du XVIII<sup>e</sup> siècle japonais. » (de Mandiargues, 1976, 46).

[s]es nombreuses nuits d'insomnie extrêmement pénibles. » (Oshima, 1980b, 240) Se tuer soi-même aboutit finalement à tuer les autres : « Chacun vit en cherchant à communiquer avec les autres. Certains ne le peuvent que par le crime. Moi-même je pense faire partie de ceux-là. [...] Dans mes films je compatis avec mes assassins. » (Oshima, 1969, 53) Les films d'Oshima sont, par conséquent, les mémoires d'un meurtrier professionnel : « Il faut d'abord que mon œuvre soit un crime, et elle ne sera art que parce qu'elle sera crime, agression contre un état de fait à détruire. Si la destruction est accomplie, il y a art. » (Oshima, cité par Niogret, 1970, 66) « Faire un film est un acte criminel ; [...] je suis probablement celui qui commet un crime irréparable. » (Oshima, 1978, 12)<sup>2</sup>

Comme tout vrai film érotique, *L'empire des sens* joue avec la dialectique – ou l'alternance – du visible et du caché. Ceci signifie que même si Oshima nous montre tout, il nous cache des choses. « Il a réussi l'incroyable pari de tout montrer en suggérant plus. » (Niogret in Oshima, 1976, 50) Evidemment le jeu du visible et du caché laisse toujours quelque chose en suspens, en confirmant ainsi notre définition de la sensualité en tant que promesse laissée en suspens. Mais l'alternance du visible et du caché ne s'arrête pas là, à des scènes courtes, à des moments distincts. Ce qui est étonnant à ce porno de grand maître, est qu'il a gagné le renom du plus sensuel porno du monde, tandis que le porno se limite à la première partie : à la seconde partie, les relations sexuelles ne sont qu'insinuées. Pourtant, il a écrit dans ses notes, « Je vais faire un "film porno", pas seulement un film, mais un "film porno" de A à Z. » (Oshima, 1980b, 317) Qu'entendait-il par ces mots ?

Evidemment, il y a plusieurs façons de suivre un porno : de l'ennui profond et du rire à larmes jusqu'à la stimulation sexuelle. Nous supposons que le spectateur suit le film attentivement. La première partie du film – les premières 50 minutes précisément – arrive très probablement à l'exciter.<sup>3</sup> Mais, à la seconde partie, que se passe-t-il ? La stimulation est-elle déjà tombée dans l'oubli ? Elle a été complètement gratuite alors, le porno pour le porno ? Déjà vers le milieu de la 1<sup>re</sup> partie les premières allusions au meurtre et à la castration sont lancées. (Gros plans de rasoir, de lame de couteau, de verre cassé, d'aiguille pour les cheveux, de ciseaux. Les mots d'une servante à Kichi, comme quoi Sada va le tuer s'ils continuent de rester enfermés...) La seconde partie trouve le spectateur (idéal) stimulé sexuellement, et c'est là qu'Oshima commence à lui jeter sur la figure l'angoisse de mort. (Elle commence tout doucement pour atteindre son point culminant au meurtre, et encore plus haut, à la castration finale.) Toute la seconde partie se trouve sous le poids de la 1<sup>re</sup> en ajoutant, en petites gouttes, l'angoisse de mort. Ici les masques tombent, Sada, le couteau dans la main, le menace ouvertement de mort ainsi que de castration à plusieurs reprises. La démonstration des organes génitaux est ici rare, même si le metteur en scène avait souvent la possibilité de les montrer. Ceci signifie que les rôles sont inversés : maintenant c'est l'angoisse de mort qui est prédominante alors que le sexe apparaît seulement comme insinuation. Pourtant, habitués au porno de la 1<sup>re</sup> partie, notre désir de voir reste de plus en plus insatisfait. Devant les scènes érotiques, nous avons maintenant toujours la même impression, « Tu n'as rien vu de Hiroshima ».

(Etant donné que nous aussi nous parlons de crime, nous nous permettons d'abuser de Marguerite Duras.) Le fait est qu'ici les organes génitaux sont filmés uniquement aux moments les plus décisifs de l'angoisse de mort (du spectateur) réussissant de cette façon à lier indissolublement sexe et mort. Et précisément, ils sont dévoilés seulement pendant la dernière demi-heure du film qui est consacrée presque entièrement aux répétitions de la strangulation.

Qu'est-ce qu'Oshima réussit-il avec cette mise en scène ? Mais, en principe, d'approcher deux « sensations » éloignées et étrangères pour les gens dits normaux, la stimulation sexuelle et l'angoisse de mort. Avec cette coïncidence contre nature, Oshima n'obtient surtout pas l'affaiblissement de la stimulation et son remplacement par l'angoisse. C'est tout à fait le contraire qui arrive : la stimulation change de visage, au lieu de s'éteindre, elle s'approfondit – et se plonge – dans l'angoisse de mort.

Il est devenu clair que nous soutenons qu'à travers *L'empire des sens* nous faisons la rencontre d'une expérience extraordinaire. Mais, arrêtons-nous à cette coïncidence – que nous avons traité de « contre nature » – de la stimulation sexuelle et de l'angoisse de mort. Lorsqu'un danger survient pendant le sexe, ceci a comme résultat l'arrêt de l'activité sexuelle ; de même, pendant la fuite d'un vrai danger toute stimulation est rendue impossible. (L'instinct de vie se démontre bien plus fort que l'instinct sexuel.) Et voici que *L'empire des sens*, comme nous avons déjà dit, est justement basé au fait qu'au moment de la strangulation d'un homme a lieu une érection – c'est un fait qui apparaît d'abord dans *L'histoire de l'œil* de Georges Bataille, le plus grand théoricien du sujet sexe/mort. Tout le monde connaît par contre que la simultanéité de la stimulation sexuelle et de la mort – que l'on rencontre assez souvent chez Oshima – est une des plus graves perversions, qu'elle peut conduire directement au meurtre sexuel et au viol. Mais au suicide aussi : l'auto-érotique asphyxiation que de Sade décrit en détail dans *Justine*. Comment se fait-il alors que tant de monde a pu suivre et aimé ce film ? En deux mots, comment sommes-nous tombés dans le piège d'Oshima ?

Déjà nous connaissons par Freud (1992b, 378-380 ; 1992a, 45-46) que l'angoisse de mort naît aussi par la restriction sexuelle : c'est la libido excitée mais insatisfaite qui se transforme directement en angoisse. Ceci signifie en premier lieu que l'angoisse est un destin possible de la libido : Oshima ne fait qu'encourager les deux en même temps. Mais le fait que l'angoisse apparaît à la place de la satisfaction sexuelle peut nous amener à penser que la libido trouve finalement satisfaction dans l'angoisse. Oshima en nous offrant excitation sexuelle et angoisse en même temps réussit à satisfaire la libido qu'il excite.

Une seconde réponse pourrait se trouver chez Burke et chez Kant (1986, 99, 113). Le sublime n'est pas le superlatif du beau. Au contraire, il procure chez nous des sentiments qui peuvent se développer en peur ou terreur. C'est vivre la grandeur de la nature mais de distance, c'est à-dire sans être confronté réellement avec elle : la vue d'un cataracte, d'une tempête, d'un précipice, de l'explosion d'un volcan... Le sublime (en son sens dynamique) nous procure ces sentiments de peur ou de terreur au moment justement où nous nous sentons en pleine sécurité. En étant éloignés de la source qui nous terrifie, nous sommes conscients que notre vie n'est pas en danger. Et c'est là que cette source nous lance le défi de sortir de nous-mêmes, hors des limites de la condition humaine. Elle nous pousse à vivre nos limites, jusqu'à dépasser même la peur de la mort. Nous ne som-

<sup>2</sup> « Fondamentalement, Nagisa Oshima est un criminel, et aussi un révolutionnaire. » (Danvers-Tatum, 1986, 13)

<sup>3</sup> Des opinions divergentes sur ce point. Voir, par exemple, Bonitzer, 1976, 51 ; de Mandiargues, 1976, 46.

mes plus enchaînés dans notre entourage, mais nous sentons que nous nous étendons au-delà de la nature. Entre l'œuvre d'art et le porno, je crois alors que « sublime » est justement la qualification qui convient à *L'empire des sens*.

Un meurtre peut-il jamais être qualifié de « sublime » ?? Essayons de l'approcher de plus près. Ce qui le distingue des autres crimes passionnels est évidemment que Sada l'a commis sans raison apparente, en ayant obtenu au préalable le consentement de sa victime. Comment ceci a-t-il été possible ? D'abord, n'oublions pas que Kichi et Sada appartiennent à une culture autre que la nôtre, une culture où la sexualité et la mortalité sont vécues à fond. Ils appartiennent à une culture où la survie n'est pas une valeur absolue, mais une valeur sous condition. Le rôle que tient le suicide – le fameux hara-kiri – dans la culture japonaise est connu. Ici ce n'est évidemment pas l'exigence de dignité qui a provoqué le meurtre et le consentement de Kichi. D'habitude, son consentement est interprété comme désir d'offrir à une femme le plus grand plaisir possible. Pour nous, c'est plutôt que Kichi a été victime de la douceur de l'approche de la mort. Il lui dit, « Mais, si tu commences [à m'étrangler], ne t'arrêtes pas parce que ça fait mal... » Il a été victime de sa délivrance absolue entre les mains de Sada. N'oublions pas pourtant que la strangulation comme jeu sexuel est son propre jeu. A noter aussi que Sada ne dormait plus et que Kichi était épuisé par l'activité sexuelle et l'insomnie – il était resté sans dormir afin de faire l'amour avec Sada jour et nuit sans arrêt. Pourtant Sada n'a pas tué Kichi pour goûter un moment de plaisir suprême, comme on entend dire souvent, en donnant ainsi au meurtre un aspect cruel. Quand elle prend ce jeu vraiment au sérieux – ils sont en train de faire l'amour – Kichi survit à sa strangulation. Pourtant Sada finit par l'étrangler comme même.

Deux personnes qui vivent enfermées dans des lieux clos en faisant l'amour pratiquement sans interruption apprennent à vivre l'orgasme (la petite mort) tout le temps – et étant donné leur grande passion, il n'y a pas de saturation, mais l'orgasme garde toute sa force malgré sa répétition. L'orgasme, de moment privilégié qu'il est, devient exigence pour tout moment.<sup>4</sup> Si ce n'est pas possible – et pratiquement ce n'est pas possible, puisque la stimulation exige le repos. Si ce n'est pas possible, alors, que faire, se contenter de son substitut – ou ambitionner de viser son archétype –, la mort réelle c'est-à-dire, la grande mort. Il se peut que la sur-consommation de la petite mort conduise directement à la quête de la grande mort. Oshima affirme à propos du *Double Suicide*, un de ses films antérieurs : « Désirer sans cesse de faire l'amour est évidemment un signe de vie, mais nous voulons ne pas omettre de remarquer que quand la vie se présente avec une pareille force, la mort ne tarde pas de rentrer en jeu. » (Oshima, 1979-1980)

Si on croit Pascal (1978, 77-78), d'ailleurs, déjà le fait qu'ils étaient enfermés tout le temps dans des lieux clos les place très proche de l'obsession de la mort : sortir hors de chez-moi et me divertir signifie, au fond, sortir hors de moi et divertir l'idée de la mort. (Parce que chez-moi et à l'intérieur de moi il n'y a que la mort qui s'empare de moi, selon Pascal toujours.) 'Rester dedans' est devenu pour les amants tragiques une seconde nature ; ceci pourrait provoquer le désir chez Sada de ne pas laisser Kichi sortir de son corps à elle ; le désir chez Kichi de rester 'dedans' pour toujours. « On me dit : ce genre d'amour n'est pas viable. Mais comment évaluer la viabilité ?



Pourquoi ce qui est viable est-il un Bien ? Pourquoi *durer* est-il mieux que *brûler* ? » (Barthes, 1977, 30) La chambre close qui les enferme et les emprisonne à portes ouvertes est une image sombre de l'utérus, une initiation à celle-ci. La seule différence est que celle-ci, l'utérus, se trouve à l'intérieur du corps de Sada : Sada va survivre à son meurtre parce que justement son désir n'était pas tant la mort en tant que telle – et tenter, par exemple, un double suicide, comme il est fréquent au Japon et chez Oshima – mais il s'agissait d'un désir proprement sexuel – garder dedans l'homme après le coït –, l'accomplissement duquel exigeait malheureusement un meurtre. « Sada : Je veux te le couper pour que tu restes dans moi. » C'est la première fois que l'idée de castration apparaît chez Sada. « Sada : Si je te le coupe, tu mourras ? Kichi : Oui. » Apprendre à accomplir absolument tous ses desirs se présente ici comme un long chemin sans retour. Selon Bataille (1957, 79), l'érotisme est marqué par le jeu alternatif de l'interdit et de la transgression.

Dans ses lieux clos où ils étaient enfermés, faisant l'amour pendant toute la journée, Sada et Kichi apprennent à vivre en tant que Un. Le corps étranger, qui est la source du plaisir, est vécu comme son propre corps. Le long chemin qu'ils traversent en accomplissant tous leurs desirs n'a pas de retour parce qu'il est lui-même un retour en arrière. « Je suis le sein », pense l'infans selon Freud.<sup>5</sup> Je suis le lieu du plaisir. « Le sens dernier de l'érotisme est la fusion, la suppression de la limite », écrit Bataille. (1957, 143) Pourtant, Un, ça saute aux yeux, ils ne le sont pas. Déjà quand Sada donne l'ordre à Kichi de faire l'amour avec une passante il est évident qu'elle sent – ou qu'elle veut – posséder le corps de Kichi. Mais lui ne fait pas l'amour avec la passante – Sada ne possède rien du tout et c'est le moment de le réaliser. Sada avait déjà décidé qu'ils ne pouvaient pas vivre tous les deux, qu'ils ne pouvaient pas vivre séparés par l'espace, en tant que deux. Elle sent que sa mort à lui approche et essaie de s'enfuir avec un de ses anciens clients, mais sans succès. Sada est descendue à petits pas jusqu'au fond de sa psyché et c'est là qu'elle a rencontré, qu'elle s'est confrontée avec la castration. Selon Freud (1985, 231), « on peut même aller jusqu'à affirmer que l'angoisse de castration elle-même ne recèle pas de secret plus profond ni d'autre signification. » La castration finale de Kichi, c'est elle qui dévoile le motif du meurtre : c'est maintenant que les organes génitaux de Kichi font partie de son corps à elle, « Je suis le sein ». Le point culminant du meurtre est justement Sada errante dans les rues de Tokyo, rayonnante de bonheur – disent les journaux de l'époque –, les organes de Kichi dans les

<sup>4</sup> « Le désir de Sada est d'être perpétuellement excitée sexuellement. » (Turim, 1998, 135).

<sup>5</sup> S. Freud, note du 12-7-1938 (Londres), G.W. XVII, p. 151.



maines – et c'est justement cette scène de la corrida qu'Oshima choisit de nous cacher !

Pourtant, si c'est à chercher les raisons du « meurtre », il y en a d'autres aussi : D'abord, Kichi continue de temps à autre à avoir des relations avec sa femme, chose qui fait chaque fois exploser la jalousie de Sada. Mais, à mon avis, il y a encore une raison qui est précisément celle qui met en marche la force qu'a besoin l'accomplissement d'un meurtre. Il s'agit des moments qui précèdent le meurtre. Sada, il y a longtemps, ne dort plus, car elle veut regarder Kichi dormir. Kichi ne dort que d'un œil. Il ouvre ses yeux, il voit qu'elle ne le regarde pas. C'est évident, alors, il n'est plus l'objet de son désir quand il dort... Il commence à réaliser (ou à craindre) que la chute de la passion de Sada pour lui a déjà commencé.

**K :** Je ne sais pas si je peux, mais viens.

**S :** Vraiment ?

(Sada recommence à lui faire l'amour mais Kichi s'endort, même en se trouvant à l'intérieur de son corps. Sada se fâche, elle le réveille, il s'endort, elle le réveille, il s'endort, il se réveille.)

**S :** Tu souffres ?

**K :** montre que non : Je vais dormir, regardes-moi bien. (Kichi s'endort, se réveille.)

**K :** Si je m'endors, tu vas m'étrangler ?

**S :** montre qu'oui : Tu veux que je t'étrangle ?

**K :** Si tu commences, ne t'arrêtes pas à moitié. Après ça fait mal.

(Sada se prépare pour l'étrangler de nouveau. Elle essaie en vain de le réveiller.)

**S :** Je vais t'étrangler.

(Elle commence. Il ouvre ses yeux. Elle continue... Leurs gémissements... C'est fini.)

Sada commence à réaliser (ou à craindre) que la chute de la passion de Kichi pour elle a déjà commencé. Elle le tue en tant qu'il est encore amoureux d'elle, avant qu'il ne cesse de l'être. Pourtant il est connu que dans le crime un seul moment pèse autant qu'un motif éternel et est capable de provoquer un meurtre : Sada ne pardonne pas à Kichi de s'endormir en faisant l'amour avec elle. Elle se venge en le tuant. Ça ne compte pas pour elle qu'il lui fait l'amour continuellement ; ça ne compte que ce seul moment, que son corps à lui, –celui qui les unit– l'a finalement trahi et elle l'a vu s'endormir et encore s'endormir et encore s'endormir... Pourtant Kichi est innocent. Si son corps l'a trahi, lui n'a pas trahi Sada : Il l'a appelée seulement parce qu'il voulait se trouver à l'intérieur de son corps même en dormant... Il l'a appelée parce qu'il voulait –exiger– constituer à chaque

instant un corps unique avec elle – mais il a échoué, la façon n'était pas la bonne. On est obligé alors de conclure que Sada –moyennant le meurtre, la castration et les 4 jours d'errance – a seulement trouvé un moyen plus efficace pour le même désir/exigence des amants : être UN, ne plus vivre séparés. (Ça n'a duré que 4 jours, oui, mais que faire ?, ça a duré 4 vrais jours et 4 nuits !!) Il s'agit d'un compromis multiple. Elle lui ôte les organes sans que lui ne les perde, puisque entre-temps il a gagné la mort ; sans que lui ne meure à cause de cela. Avec la castration Sada a pu vaincre la mort : même pas la mort n'a réussi à séparer l'Inséparable. (L'Inséparable –je suis le sein– est l'exigence ultime de l'humain se trouvant au fond de la psyché.<sup>6</sup>) Il n'y avait pas d'autre solution pour eux, sa place à lui était à l'intérieur de Sada. Il rentrait déjà dans son corps, il devait rentrer dedans en entier, mais cette fois-ci y rester : le deuil. (Pendant le deuil, le sujet incorpore le mort, en deux mots, il le mange. (Freud, 1968))

Pourtant, Kichi une fois mort, son corps appartient à sa femme. (Nussbaum, 2004, 155) Sada vole le corps : elle lui ôte les organes génitaux pour ne pas les céder à elle. L'amour passionné entre Kichi et Sada était finalement un amour entre un homme marié et une ex-prostituée. (La seconde scène du film, avec Sada épiait le couple, déclare l'identité de Kichi, il est marié ; la troisième, avec le vieillard, l'identité de Sada, elle a été prostituée.) Des fois, les prostituées volent l'argent de leurs clients avant de les quitter ; maintenant qu'il n'est plus là, elle lui vole son objet le plus précieux pour elle, son sexe. A ne pas sous-estimer le fait que Sada était une ex-prostituée japonaise : il était fréquent au Japon du 17<sup>e</sup> siècle de demander des preuves d'amour aux « filles de joie » (*yūjos*) parce que justement elles manquaient de sincérité : « quand [...] elles prêteraient serment, elles se feraient couper les cheveux, arracher les ongles ou même couper un doigt » (Asuka, 2003, 51/53-54, 61) Il se peut, alors, qu'au Japon une prostituée soit par tradition familiarisée à l'idée qu'à un certain moment il faudra peut-être donner une preuve indubitable de son amour à l'homme qu'elle va vraiment aimer. La mort de Kichi –son consentement– était sa preuve de son amour pour elle ; la castration, la preuve de Sada de son amour pour lui. Au lieu de se mutiler elle-même, elle le mute après mort pour (lui) montrer qu'il était vraiment impossible à elle de se séparer de lui.<sup>7</sup> Une fois les preuves ultimes

<sup>6</sup> L'exigence du sens apparaît comme la réaction de la psyché à la destruction du « Je suis le sein ». (Mirasyesis, 1999a, 125-150).

<sup>7</sup> Le voyage d'une semaine qu'elle propose à son ex-client était aussi une quête de preuve d'amour de sa part – mais celle-ci n'a jamais été donnée. « Qu'est-ce que tu dis ? Si quelqu'un l'apprend, je dois me tuer ! », il lui répond révolté.

d'amour échangées réciproquement, Sada va écrire sur le corps de Kichi avec le sang de la castration : « Sada et Kichi, ensemble pour toujours ».

Mais, finalement, quel a été le but de Oshima dans tout cela ? De nous offrir une stimulation sexuelle sans précédent ? Plutôt, de nous offrir une mort sans précédent moyennant un meurtre qu'il n'en est pas un. (*L'empire des sens* brise non seulement la notion du porno mais aussi celle du crime.) En suivant le porno sincèrement nous nous glissons dans la mort de Kichi tout doucement, imperceptiblement. C'est comme si Kichi mourait en suppliant Sada de le faire mourir. C'est la mort la plus douce qu'Oshima a préservé pour cet homme qui trompait grossièrement sa femme même dans leur propre maison. Au début, le meurtre approche comme jalousie et vengeance ; au milieu, il arrive comme égoïsme extrême, inimaginable : il est le point culminant de son plaisir à elle afin qu'elle obtienne la plus grande satisfaction : Sada, en lui faisant l'amour et en l'étrangeant en même temps, lui demande de lui nouer les mains afin qu'il n'interrompe pas de nouveau – quand il se sentira asphyxié – « le plus beau moment », comme elle dit. Il l'accepte, sa soumission absolue est obtenue. Entre-temps, le spectateur est bouleversé, révolté même, elle le tue, devant ses yeux, pour un seul moment de plaisir – même si c'est le moment de plaisir suprême !!! Mais juste après, tout ça change. Elle le laisse vivre. Et c'est là qu'elle lui demande de l'étrangler cette fois pour de vrai. Il est en train de dormir, elle le réveille pour qu'il soit réveillé, pour être sûre qu'il n'a pas changé d'avis. On s'attendait qu'elle le tue pendant la copulation, mais elle le tue juste après. Ou bien, elle l'a tué pendant la copulation (quand elle lui nouait les mains pour son plaisir à elle), mais lui a survécu à sa mort. (Exactement comme à la *Pendaison*, un autre film d'Oshima où le condamné à mort survit à sa pendaison et il est nécessaire de le tuer de nouveau).

Dans *L'empire des sens*, la mort a été la seule voie pour le sexe. La surabondance du plaisir du sexe est ici le moyen pour vivre même la mort en tant que plaisir. Démontrer qu'elle peut être aussi un autre plaisir. La mort a été le point culminant du plaisir du sexe ; pourtant, la mort survient sans sexe pour qu'elle soit vécue en entier, pure, sans être mêlée, altérée par le plaisir sexuel. Le but était de séparer finalement la mort du sexe – déjà depuis longtemps nous avons dit que l'angoisse de mort avait empoisonné – ou avait enrichi – le plaisir sexuel. La mort ne peut pas être définitivement séparée du sexe : le besoin de la castration. Quand Kichi accepte de se faire nouer les mains, il se donne à elle entièrement pour lui offrir du plaisir ; quand Sada l'étrangle effectivement, elle se donne à lui et lui offre la mort pour lui offrir du plaisir. « Kichi : Mais, si tu commences [à m'étrangler], ne t'arrête pas parce que ça fait mal... ». Elle l'étrangle réellement pour ne pas le laisser insatisfait – la mort est vécue en tant que désir sexuel. Elle serre ses mains autour de son cou, comme il s'était habitué de sentir son corps à elle se serrer autour de son membre. Leur relation s'est terminée – c'est-à-dire accomplie – au moment où il se laisse étrangler par elle, les mains noués – que vivre d'autre, que partager après ça ? Le fait qu'il n'est pas réellement mort est un détail sans importance, elle va tout doucement, tendrement, combler la lacune.

Personne ne pouvait s'imaginer qu'un acte aussi violent et sanglant qu'une castration pourrait se précéder d'une mort tellement calme, douce, silencieuse. Pourquoi alors tout le monde

a-t-il retenu la castration et pas cette mort ? Mais, parce que tel était le but du metteur en scène. Le rôle de la castration a été de bruyamment occulter le moment de la mort. Avec les mots d'Oshima, « Pour moi le cinéma est une visualisation des désirs du metteur en scène. Seulement, les désirs du metteur en scène n'apparaissent pas tels quels, sous leur forme immédiate, sur l'écran. Dans un film, les désirs du metteur en scène apparaissent sous des formes plus ou moins déviées. Et je me demande si, craignant constamment que mes désirs apparaissent dans mes œuvres, je n'ai pas tout fait pour les voiler. N'ai-je pas continué à faire du cinéma pour cacher mes désirs ? Expriment mes désirs sous une forme détournée, ils en sont probablement apparus d'autant plus clairement. » (Oshima, 1980b, 313) Oshima a profité de l'acte de la castration pour laisser s'accomplir derrière elle, dans son ombre, son plus profond désir : enfin mourir, s'éteindre doucement. « Déjà je marche manifestement vers la mort. Et lorsque le bois outre mesure, je tente un lent suicide. » (Oshima, 1978, 13)

Oshima affirme (1980b, 288) à propos des films porno : « Celui qui va voir un film «pink» ne le regarde pas pour se préparer à accomplir un acte sexuel. C'est le fait en lui-même de voir ce film qui constitue, pour le spectateur, un acte sexuel. [...] Le film «pink» [...] s'adresse seulement aux personnes qui trouvent une satisfaction sexuelle à voir ces films. » Nous avons dit que l'expérience extra-ordinaire que le spectateur peut vivre en suivant cet œuvre d'art-porno est justement la coïncidence de la stimulation sexuelle et de l'angoisse de mort. Nous nous demandons, alors, si cette sensation ne veut peut-être pas évoquer un vrai acte sexuel entre Kichi et Sada. La différence serait qu'à la place de la petite mort, Oshima nous offre la grande : le spectateur – stimulé et angoissé en même temps – se glisse enfin, tout doucement, dans la mort douce de Kichi. (Pour vivre ce voyage, il faut suivre le film sans préjugés moraux – je veux dire sans préjugés moraux en ce qui concerne évidemment la façon de mourir.)

La question est alors ou est-ce qu'intervient la sensualité dans un film porno ? Au début de cet exposé nous avons défini la sensualité en tant que promesse laissée en suspens, mais il n'y a rien laissé en suspens dans *L'empire des sens*, au contraire le plus fou désir sexuel est aussitôt accompli ! A moins que la sensualité ne fasse pas appel au sexe mais à la mort. La sensualité provoque des sentiments érotiques mais c'est le désir de mort qu'elle éveille au fond. Quelque chose est sensuelle en tant qu'elle fait appel à la mort en utilisant la voie – et la voix – du sexe. La plus part du temps la mort ne fait son apparition dans le sexe qu'en tant que sexe : la fameuse petite mort. Mais ici aussi c'est à se demander si, dans le sexe, on ne recherche justement cette rencontre avec la mort... Et si ce n'est le sexe – la mort effectuée dans le sexe – qui accomplit finalement le désir de mort. (Mirasyesis, 1998b) Si le sexe est un substitut de la mort, c'est normal l'anormal, le substitut, à un certain moment, d'être remplacé par son « archétype ».

La première fois que Kichi remarque Sada dans sa maison, c'est quand elle est en train de se disputer avec une autre servante, le couteau dans la main. « Kichi : Tu devrais avoir autre chose entre les mains. » La sensualité, une promesse de mort, alors, laissée en suspens ?! Mais *L'empire des sens* accomplit de même le plus fou désir de mort – comme si la mort était un désir sexuel de plus... C'est là justement que la sensualité rencontre le porno : Oshima traite la mort comme si c'était du sexe

pornographique. Il la dote de la satisfaction absolue, filmée de très près, étape par étape, seulement pour nous. Nous qui avons aimé *L'empire des sens*, nous sommes tous des voyeurs de la mort. Je m'explique :

Nous avons déjà dit que *L'empire des sens* –comme tout film érotique– est fondé sur l'alternance du visible et du caché. Ce truc a comme résultat d'éveiller de plus en plus le désir de voir. Oshima maîtrise tellement ce jeu, qu'il nous donne l'impression qu'un des buts de ce film était non pas de nous stimuler sexuellement, mais justement de stimuler notre pulsion de voir. Comme nous avons déjà dit, le porno s'y limite à la 1<sup>re</sup> partie, tandis qu'à la seconde partie la vue des organes génitaux ne survient que quand il y a une liaison directe avec l'angoisse de mort. Le résultat est que toute la seconde partie laisse notre désir de voir plutôt déçu, insatisfait. Son jeu est révélé à la fin : il nous donne amplement la vue de la mort – et il ne la donne qu'à nous.

La première chose qui nous choque dans ce film c'est que les gens font très souvent l'amour devant les autres, ils le font indépendamment s'ils sont seuls ou pas. (De ce fait, par exemple, les servantes sont tout le temps spectatrices de la vie sexuelle de leurs maîtres.) Ce n'est pas un hasard si deux scènes de voyeurisme se trouvent au début du film. (Des enfants dévoilant les organes génitaux d'un vieillard pour se moquer de lui ; Sada et une autre servante épiaient leurs maîtres en train de faire l'amour.) C'est parce qu'Oshima avait l'intention par la suite de renverser le porno et l'interdit : le spectateur de ce film porno ne se sent pas voyeur –et il n'est pas non plus–, car, dès les premiers moments, il fait la connaissance d'une culture –et d'une époque– où tout le monde est en train de voir impunément l'interdit, qu'il n'en est pas un. Tout le monde voit, est vu et montre. Si tout le monde est voyeur, personne n'en est. Pourtant, si Oshima abolit le voyeurisme, c'est pour le glorifier par la suite :

Il n'y a que le soit disant « meurtre » qui survient sans spectateur, et il survient après pas mal de répétitions qui ont tous jours lieu sans témoin. C'est étonnant quand même que Oshima ouvre toutes les portes pendant les moments du sexe mais fait mourir Kichi huis clos, alors que la mort célébrée des Japonais, le hara-kiri, survient très souvent devant des spectateurs/témoins qui restent immobiles et laissent le spectacle se dérouler. Nous regardons un porno et nous ne nous sentons voyeurs regardant le plaisir interdit qu'au moment du « meurtre ». Cette fois-ci c'est à travers notre regard que la mort acquiert quelque chose du plaisir du sexe, qu'elle se mêle, pour encore une fois, avec lui. La mort de Kichi n'a été vue par personne ; seulement par nous, jusqu'au bout. Seulement par nous et par Sada. Après tant de témoins aux jeux sexuels des amants, la solitude de la dernière scène du spectacle nous bouleverse, elle nous rend immédiatement les complices de Sada – comme d'ailleurs Kichi a collaboré avec elle au moment de son propre meurtre. La vue de la mort de Kichi nous lie intimement avec eux. Si nous arrivons à nous glisser si imperceptiblement dans la mort de Kichi c'est aussi parce qu'elle est faite seulement pour nous. Oshima a su mettre en scène une vraie corrida, comme le titre japonais du film, *La Corrida de l'amour*, à juste titre l'indique. La corrida –mieux que tout autre spectacle– utilise et stimule le voyeurisme de la mort. La corrida rend clair que le voyeurisme peut être de la mort et que la mort peut être le gain d'un jeu. Je me demande si les spectateurs de la taumachie qui poussent des cris de triomphe devant la mort du taureau s'identifient tous au toréador qui tue ou bien aussi quelque uns au taureau qui meurt...

Qu'en est-il alors avec notre définition de la sensualité comme « promesse de mort laissée en suspens » ? Sada est un appel sexuel à la mort, elle mène Kichi –et pas seulement– à la mort, mais elle-même y échappe. Personne de nous –Kichi non plus– ne verra Sada mourir, même si elle nous confie mille et mille fois le visage de sa petite mort.

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## »ARTIFICIAL MOUNTAIN ROCKS« – ART AS A MEANS OF BRIDGING THE GAP BETWEEN THE NATURAL AND THE ARTIFICIAL IN THE CHINESE AESTHETICS

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Ever since the classical period the debates about the relationship between the natural and the artificial played a central part in Chinese aesthetic thought. Although its context has greatly changed, this question is ever so present in the work of contemporary artists and thinkers of today, facing a highly urbanized reality of today's China.

As a response to the unfortunate landmark of modern architecture, the Beijing West Train Station, Beijing sculptor Zhan Wang (展望, 1962–) proposed a contemporary variation of an ancient art form. His suggestion was a remake in the line of the so-called *jia shan shi* (假山石, artificial mountain rocks, which were an obligatory addition in the classical Chinese gardens of the Ming and Qing period. Contrary to his traditional model, Zhan Wang suggested a new version of *jia shan shi* he called *jia jia shan shi* (假假山石), literally, the "artificial artificial rocks". Bending and pounding sheets of stainless steel onto the surface of an original *jia shan shi* in 1995 he created the first artifacts that were later included in his 1997 project *New Picture of Beijing: Today and Tomorrow's Capital–Rockery Remolding Plan*. Convinced that the new urban reality calls for a new art form in which the artificial and the natural would meet, he published a manifesto containing many subtle hints that link his sculptures with the tradition of *jia shan shi* – not only on the formal, but also on the conceptual level. What might seem as a simple parody of traditional aesthetic ideals or a further step down the platonic ladder of copies is in Zhan Wang's case much more than this. Apart from the very obvious reference on the applicability of traditional aesthetic ideals in the present time, the manifesto advocates a conceptual decision which is very much related to the traditional *jia shan shi*.

The art form of the artificial mountain rocks can be dated back at least to the Ming period when the private gardens were first designed in the southern regions of China. In the aesthetics of gardens the distinction between the cultivated and the wild nature, between mountains-rivers *shan shui* 山水 and the gardens-fields *tian yuan* 田园, drawn in the Jin dynasty literary theory was reinterpreted and recombined. In the changed social circumstances of the late Ming dynasty the aesthetic principles of the "mountains and rivers" genre transcended the boundaries of the representation of wild nature and – together with the "fields and gardens" genre – formed a new hybrid art

form. The art of private garden design incorporated the categories of the wild nature and aimed for their re-creation.

This shift is best observable in the philosophical part of the text *On gardening* (园冶) by Ji Cheng (1582–1642?), the celebrated garden designer and theoretician of the late Ming period:

古之乐田园者，居于畎亩之中；  
今耽丘壑者，选村庄之胜，团团篱落，  
处处桑麻；凿水为濠，挑堤种柳...

*Once upon a time those who appreciated gardens and fields lived in the countryside. Nowadays those that long for the mountains and valleys, choose a dwelling inside the village and then all around their house they plant mulberries and hemp, shape the streams and dig ditches, build walls and plant willows.*<sup>1</sup>

As we can see from the quoted paragraph, the cultivation of nature moved from outside of the city walls into the domain of human dwellings. Although Ji Cheng mentions the appearance of this phenomenon in the villages, the need to re-create the "mountains and rivers" became even more significant in the urbanized environment of the expanding cities. It was these circumstances that initiated the trend of the creation of private gardens among the literati of the Chinese south. The wilderness of the "mountains and rivers" – the scenery of the landscape painting and poetry entered the courtyards of private homes and provided a privilege of a simulated escape into the solitude of the mountain wilderness. Ji Cheng thus points out that it is not necessary any more to resort into the mountains in order to attain inner tranquility:

足征市隐犹胜巢居，能为闹处寻幽，  
胡舍近方图远；得闲即诣，随兴携游。

*It is enough to resort to retirement inside the town, and yet it is the same as living in a remote mountain hut. You can seek the tranquility beyond the clatter, you can live nearby but still ponder upon the far, thus you can attain idleness and depart on a journey, following your own desires.*<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Ji Cheng 计成, Yuan ye tu shuo 园冶图说, Shangdong huabao chubanshe, Ji'nan 2003, p. 51.

<sup>2</sup> Ibidem, p. 49.

"Hidden inside the city" a person is provided with a possibility to escape into the simulated world of mountains and rivers. This became the prevalent motif of the art of private garden design.

Nelson I. Wu interprets this escape as a symbolic transfer, "a symbolic transition to ferry us architecturally away from our world of organized action, yet without leaving it, so that we may cultivate our 'eternal' nature."<sup>3</sup> Despite its deliberate and obvious simulatedness this transfer has real effects. The garden becomes a privileged place, where the outside world of the official obligations is put aside and the time, space and fleetingness of life seem unimportant:

*When man leaves this courtyard and enters his garden, thus away from organized society, he is not the social man who has to be myopic to eternal values so that he may function well in immediate situations, nor is he the biological man who is constantly becoming and is responsible for reproduction. He is, instead, the eternal man of Chinese landscape painting and poetry whose growth, adolescence and obligations for reproduction are either behind him or are not his concern.<sup>4</sup>*

Although this type of gardens is limited with a small area, they are expected to recreate within their borders a whole range of scenes from the wild and uncultivated mountain nature, adjusted to the participant in this simulative performance. A focal idea of the Chinese aesthetics – that man is capable of re-creating the natural environment – is pushed to its furthest limits in this art form. The entire structure of the garden is intended to represent a miniaturized world of mountains and rivers. With the serpentine paths, carefully shaped streams, controlled tree-growth and seemingly random placement of the rocks, the design retains the appearance of the natural environment, that has grown by itself, spontaneously (*zi ran* 自然). Every shape or structure therefore has to follow the characteristics of the land, plants and materials. We can see that from Ji Cheng's instructions on the design of the covered corridors:

廊基未立，地局先留，或余屋之前后，  
渐通林许。蹊山腰，落水面，任高低曲折，  
自然断续蜿蜒...

*Before building the corridor it is necessary to choose a narrow strip of land in front of the house or behind it, going gradually through the woods. It should climb uphill, descend towards the water, obey the high and low, curves and bends, following the way of spontaneity, breaking and continuing as a path of a snake or a snail.<sup>5</sup>*

The beauty of the garden is achieved by faithfully following the natural/ heavenly characteristics (*tian ran* 天然) of the environment where the garden is placed. Therefore, concludes Ji Cheng, it is the best if the characteristics are explicit enough for the designer to recognize:

园地惟山林最胜，有高有凹，有曲有深，  
有峻而悬，有平而坦，自成天然之趣，  
不烦人事之工。

*In order to be able to shape the mountains and forests as beautifully as possible, it is best to choose land that has higher and lower parts, uneven and deep parts, steep slopes and precipitous crevices, even and flat areas. On such land the design can follow the inclinations of the heavenly nature and the traces of human activities are not visible.<sup>6</sup>*

The extreme scope of the attempt to re-create the natural by the means of art can be identified in the art form of artificial mountain rocks, the *jia shan shi*. The popularity of this garden element can be traced back to the Daoist legends about the western Kunlun mountains, where the goddess Queen mother of the West is supposed to reside. In her plantation of peach-trees the special peaches of immortality were grown, and the immortals maintained their immortality by feasting there every three thousand years. However, the legend about the immortals was not the only reason for the popularity of the artificial mountains. The most important stimulus was the desire to use the three-dimensional experience to perform the natural environment that was otherwise admired in the landscape paintings. Gardens thus became landscape paintings, open for the visitor's experience. It was of crucial importance for the spectator that he could stroll through the garden and was ever again astonished, inspired and surprised by the carefully designed scenes and their sequence. Thus the garden seemingly provoked the same sensations that painters and poets of the *shan shui* genre aspired to.

Artificial mountains served as a transition point where the esthetics of *shan shui* genre entered the gardening design. Ji Cheng's treatise in which the importance and the conceptual background of the *jia shan shi* is established, is a unique example among other theoretical texts on gardening of that period. The artificial mountains stones, shaped by thoughtful piling of the picturesquely eroded stones, are perhaps the best illustration of the way the garden designers attempted to copy the spontaneity of nature. In the introduction to his text Ji Cheng emphasizes the complex correlation between the garden designer and the natural world. First he mocks at a particular method of placing stones, used by the people of a town called Run:

环润皆佳山水，润之好事者，  
取石巧者置竹木间为假山；予偶观之，  
为发一笑。或问曰：「何笑？」

*Wonderful scenery surrounds the town, and all those people of Run that like such things, carefully pick stones, place them among bamboo and the trees and by doing so they get artificial mountains. When I saw this happening, I burst into laughter. Somebody asked me: Why are you laughing?<sup>7</sup>*

In order to be able to produce artificial mountains that seem as the real mountains, it is necessary to grasp the correct correspondence between the natural (the real) and the artificial.

<sup>3</sup> Nelson I. Wu, *Chinese and Indian Architecture: The City of Man, the Mountain of God, and the Realm of the Immortals*, George Braziller, New York 1963, p. 48.

<sup>4</sup> Ibidem, p. 46.

<sup>5</sup> Ji Cheng 计成, *Yuan ye tu shuo* 园冶图说, p. 73.

<sup>6</sup> Ibidem, p. 47.

<sup>7</sup> Ibidem, p. 25.

予曰：「世所闻有真斯有假，  
胡不假真山形，而假迎勾芒者之拳磊乎？」

*I said: The world has heard that there is the real and that then there is the artificial. Why don't you imitate the true shape of the mountains and why do you intentionally use the shape of the clenched fist, to create a mountain from a flat land?*<sup>8</sup>

The unusual metaphor of the clenched fist can be understood as a reference to a method, where the designer tries to produce a successful plagiary by combining isolated natural elements – like a fist that can only originate in five stretched fingers. On the contrary, Ji Cheng claims, it is necessary to imitate nature in its complexity without trying to schematize it to form a sum of original elements. A mountain can only be copied by copying the complexity of its form.

Asked about his abilities to do so, Ji Cheng explains his method in a very Daoist way – as “following chance”.

遂偶为成「壁」，睹观者俱称：  
「俨然佳山也」；遂播名于远近。

*I follow chance and thus a wall appears, while all the spectators say: what a great and magnificent mountain!*<sup>9</sup>

By emphasizing coincidence as a designer's device Ji Cheng tries to approach the ideal of the spontaneous generation of an art work. His aesthetic theory makes no value-difference between the natural and the artificial, between *zhen* 真 and *jia* 假, between the true and the imitated reality. The name of these structures, “artificial mountain rocks”, *jia shan shi*, exposes this equalization and transposition.

Here we come back to Zhan Wang's argument. In the theoretical prologue to his project *Artificial mountain rocks*, he emphasizes the paradoxical way in which the artificial mountain rocks bridge the gap between the natural and the artificial in Chinese aesthetics.

*In China, this was not conceived as “art.” Such stones had the power of connecting man with nature. What really confounds me is that while these rockeries are, in fact, real stones, in Chinese cultural terms they are called fake or artificial. In fact, in Chinese they are *jia shan shi*, which literally translates as “fake mountain rocks.” Why is something that is real called fake? This has to do with Chinese aesthetics: What is seen is not a rock, but a way to fulfill the imagined idea of a rock.*<sup>10</sup>

The complex correspondence between the fake/ artificial (*jia*) and the real/true/natural (*zhen*) is based on a specific understanding of the role of human actions, especially the creativity, in the universe of things and beings. From the quoted Ji Cheng's paragraph we can conclude that there is a *true shape of mountains* (*zhen shan xiang* 真山形), that individualities all possess their own specific suchness, which the artist is supposed to follow. In this context we can also interpret the notion of spontaneity *zi ran*, that Ji Cheng sets as the highest standard of the mimetic success. The term itself, consisting of

*zi* 自 (originating from) and *ran* 然 (such-ness) can thus be interpreted as “originating in suchness” or “following suchness”. But how should we interpret the term “suchness”?

When Ji Cheng writes about the imperative to “imitate the true shape of mountains”, it is of course obvious that this does not mean copying any particular existing mountain. On the contrary, he says that the imitation succeeds when the piling of stones “resigns to coincidence.” The suchness of the mountain that the generative method of spontaneity *zi ran* chooses to follow is not suchness of any particular mountain, but the suchness of the mountains in general – their inner nature becoming visible in their shape (*xing* 形). The natures of the things and beings are only accessible, explains Ji Cheng, by succumbing intentionality to coincidence. In his conclusion which follows the classical Daoist paradigm, an artist who lets his own nature work together with the nature of the thing or a being, works “in cooperation with heaven and earth”. The artificial mountains are thus merely a specific example of the generative process in art – an imitation of the spontaneous reality and are not valued any less because of their fake or imitative character. The real seems fake and the natural seems artificial, but at the same time, the fake and the artificial can become a reality, equal to the one that has grown spontaneously:

有真为假，做假成真；稍动天机，  
全叨人力；探奇投好，同志须知。

*There is the real that seems like a fake; but you can create something fake and it becomes real.*<sup>11</sup>

<sup>8</sup> Ibidem.

<sup>9</sup> Ibidem.

<sup>10</sup> Francesca Dal Lago, *Space and Public: Site Specificity in Beijing*, Art Journal 59.1, 2000, p. 75.

<sup>11</sup> Ji Cheng 计成, *Yuan ye tu shuo* 园冶图说, p. 205.

# MYTHICAL LIGHT AND ALLEGORICAL DETACHMENT IN PERFORMANCE. A MEDITERRANEAN MATTER AND A HUNGARIAN PERFORMER – TIBOR HAJAS

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In the present essay I make an attempt to introduce Tibor Hajas, a Hungarian performance-artist. I will try to do my best to avoid an art for art's sake introduction to an unknown oeuvre, because in a certain sense it could be an easy enterprise without any risk to me. Presumably there are very few outside Hungary who know Tibor Hajas' activity, and it is in great part due to the relative isolation of Hungarian culture and art. I do not want to abuse my position, therefore besides introducing Hajas I will analyze his mythical performance art in a wider context and try to locate his art in the context of discourse on representation. Whenever I teach the art of Hajas or deliver a lecture on it, I make a presentation of his performances. There is no need to inform the reader that with Hajas and generally in performance art the lecture form known as *presentation* carries within it a characteristic contradiction, since the word *presence* is implied at the etymologic core of *presentation*. But on my part this contradiction is only a fatal repetition. I would argue that the impossibility of representing a presence is an ambivalent gesture which can be found in the very heart of performance.

I mentioned above the word: *mythical*. I must explain why I used this word for Hajas. But before addressing this subject I refer to an earlier mythical example from the history of performance. It isn't difficult to find such examples because there is a great tradition in the history of avant-garde which we can read as a claim to originality. From the very beginning of the avant-garde this claim has been represented in mythical stories of artistic foundation. One of these was Marinetti's manifesto<sup>1</sup> about his emerging from a factory ditch or from a "motherly ditch half full of muddy water" as a birth. In her critical analysis of the early futurist's ideological claim to originality Rosalind Krauss called this "amniotic fluid".

*I cup off sharply and, in disgust, I pitched -- bang! -- into a ditch.... Ah! motherly ditch, half full of muddy water!*

*Factory ditch! I tasted by mouthfuls your bracing slime that recalls the saintly black breast of my Sudanese nurse! As I rose, a shiny, stinking gadabout, I felt the red-hot iron of joy deliciously pierce my heart.<sup>2</sup>*

Krauss doesn't go further in analyzing Marinetti's text then in mentioning it only as an example for the avant-gardist claim to originality. Completing and supporting her criticism from a kind of rhetorical aspect we could say that in reading this part of Marinetti's Futurist Manifesto there is a contradiction between the artist's claim to active emergence or birth (i.e. originality) and the passive elevation of his car.

*A crowd of fishermen and gouty naturalists had gathered in terror around the prodigy. Patient and meddlesome, they raised high above great iron casting nets to fish out my car that lay like a great mired shark. It emerged slowly, leaving behind in the ditch like scales, its heavy body of common sense, and its padding of comfort.*

While studying this contradiction we must take into account that the passive emergence of the car which is figuratively a metal part of Marinetti's futurist body in a sense undermines the artist's strength of action and makes it "weak" as Friedrich Nietzsche would say.

After this avant-garde ancestor let me jump forward in time and read a short part of an interview with Tibor Hajas whose "lightning" story about his birth as an artist is no less impressive than Marinetti's story. I ask the reader to listen to the mythical foundation story delivered with a massive existential vocabulary.

*Rudolf Ungváry (Interviewer): Could your intention be outlined? Do you have any intention?*

*Tibor Hajas: I could make an attempt, but the outlining consists of things which I'm not interested in. It leaves the*

<sup>1</sup> If we accept Marinetti as a chapter of the history of performance, as RoseLee Goldberg does in her *Performance Art* for instance. I must add that from the point of view of mythical stories manifestos are not less valuable traces for scholar research on the nature of performance than traces of the concrete/real performance. A short part of Goldberg's book was published in Hungarian in the former Yugoslavia, in a Hungarian art journal titled *Új Symposion* [New Symposion]. That was an art journal of the Hungarian minority living in Yugoslavia. The level of cultural autonomy in the former Yugoslavia was relatively high compared to other countries of the Eastern block that is why a chapter from a book about the history of avant-garde could be published.

<sup>2</sup> „The Foundation of Futurism” [“Manifesto of Futurism,” 1909], translated from the French by Eugen Weber, reprinted by permission of Dodd, Mead and Company from *Paths to the Present* by Eugen Weber. Copyright 1960 by Dodd, Mead and Company, Inc. (Web: <http://www.english.upenn.edu/~jenglish/English104/marinetti.html>. (Date of Access: 21.08.2006.)) I call the attention to a coincidence that the first futurist *serata* happened in Trieste, not far from the place of the 3rd Mediterranean Conference.

question open to which in a final approach we want to get an answer. That is to say what is this whole absurd, which is served as an axiom to man? What is this: to be? How can this be pushed as a given fact? It has been absolutely intangible to me since my early childhood! I vividly remember a scene, when I stared into the light of a lamp almost until it hurt: finally I perceived the glowing filament and when it is detached from the mass of the light, in that moment I understood all that had been incomprehensible. So in that moment the whole world itself became held in suspension and consequently the „light“ also became uncertain. [Italics mine. M.A.] What is „now“? Why does it happen „in this way“? Why does it happen specifically with this light? Why does it happen specifically with this form? And that was the moment of clear consciousness compared to which all other form, all tangible things are absolutely intangible.<sup>3</sup>

The existential vocabulary consists of terms like “to be”, the “absurdity” of being, “axiomatic” and “given fact”, or the “moment”. The questions based on these words are questions of an existing being determined and therefore laden by and “tuned in” to depression.<sup>4</sup> And then as the story says, in a mythical moment something happened. That was the moment of clear consciousness as Hajas puts it and in this evoked “moment” he seemingly understood as a child things otherwise intangible and incomprehensible. Therefore I call this a mythical foundation narrative of the artist’s birth told by the artist himself. In the very heart of this story there are light and pain, and this fact was pregnant with consequences at least according to the oeuvre of the artist. I mean all of Hajas’ performances or at least most of them could be connected to the evocation of this clear lightning moment.

I call the reader’s attention to another term of the narrative, and this is “detachment”. As Hajas mentioned total understanding happened when the glowing filament was detached from the mass of light. This imaginative picture is important mostly in the context of existentialism since we can understand it as an allegory of being set free from the depressively tuned mass of “being-in-world” as Heidegger would say.<sup>5</sup> There is no doubt that Hajas’ final aim was to become detached from the determinative context and his direct activity for the sake of understanding this intangible context was parallel to understanding existence as “being-toward-death” in Heidegger’s discourse. The expression of “being-toward-death” seems to be concrete or literal in the case of some performers and

RoseLee Goldberg would call Hajas’ acts “death-defying” as she calls Chris Burden’s acts in her work.<sup>6</sup> Even if there are apparent differences between philosophical discourse and artistic action, let me say that there are similarities too: in Hajas’ case the anticipation of death was realized in allegorical performances or actions while Heidegger performs metaphorical and conceptual verbal events or punceptual/quasi etymologic performative speech acts.<sup>7</sup>

When at this point of my lecture I presented a half minute long performance called *Psyche* performed by Hajas from a film directed by Gábor Bódy and titled *Narcissus and Psyche*, I hallucinated the audience whispering, and I felt it being justified in asking me why I cut this performance out from the film in which it is embedded in an organic way. I could refer here to art historian László Beke who writes about this event as an „independent insert” in the film,<sup>8</sup> but I must add that the question of the possibility (or impossibility) of cutting something out from its original context is more complicated in this case. According to Hajas’ art theory the (social, institutional, existential, medial or artistic) context is always depressing the art and the artist, so the “totality” or the “originality” as the absolute aim of his art can be reached only through the act of detachment from this alienating-depressing background. This absolute decontextualization could show the artist totally naked as at birth or before the eyes of God according to Hajas. In his opinion there is a right way to be totally enlightened both literally and figuratively, and this is the way of *light* with the help of which he could be detached from the depressing background. The light lasting only for a moment makes the moment clear and at the same time burns the picture in the viewer’s eyes.<sup>9</sup> Or in other words the momentary light is able to be the *metaphor* of the passing moment and of existence itself.<sup>10</sup> So by now we have seen how the light had transformed from the central theme of Hajas’ mythical foundation narrative into the central *medium* of his oeuvre, or conversely how he created a mythical and painful foundational event in his childhood by absorbing the metaphoric light from his oeuvre.

If we want to make this aesthetical concept or project familiar to ourselves we can reflect on it as an original modernist myth discussed by Paul de Man in his essay titled *Literary History and Literary Modernity*. Reading Nietzsche’s *On the Use and Abuse of History for Life (Vom Nutzen und Nachteil der Historie für das Leben)* and analyzing the ambivalent relationship between modernism

<sup>3</sup> Rudolf Ungváry: Leopards sat by tigers. A discussion with Tibor Hajas in 1980. Transl. by Andras Müllner, in Tibor Hajas: *Szövegek [Texts]*, Enciklopédia Publisher, Budapest, 2005.

<sup>4</sup> „Being-in-the-world. In contrast to theories of human being as a self-contained theoretical ego, Heidegger understands human being as always “outside” any supposed immanence, absorbed in social intercourse, practical tasks, and concern for its own interests. Evidence for this absorption, he argues, is that human being always finds itself caught up in a mood -- that is, “tuned in” to a given set of concerns.” Thomas Sheehan: “Heidegger, Martin (1889-1976),” *Routledge Encyclopedia of Philosophy*, editor Edward Craig, (London and New York: Routledge, 1998, IV, 307-323. <http://www.stanford.edu/dept/relstudd/faculty/sheehan/pdf/Routledge.pdf>. Date of Access: 2006.08.22.) To learn more about the connection between performance art and existentialism see Peter Gorsen: *The Return of Existentialism in Performance Art*, in Gregory Battcock and Robert Nickas (eds.): *The Art of Performance. A Critical Anthology*, New York: E. P. Dutton, 1984, 135-141.

<sup>5</sup> Including artistic patterns and traditions. “From among his contemporaries [...] only Hajas was able to entirely separate himself from the dominant artistic traditions. He was the torch-bearer of the Hungarian anti-art, Fluxus movement.” (Italics mine. M.A.) Vera Baksa-Sóos: *Emergency Landing. An homage to Tibor Hajas*, in Exhibition Catalog, Ludwig Museum, Budapest, 2005.

<sup>6</sup> We can cite here István Hajdu art historian from a radio broadcast: „Here somebody decided to reach the point of no return: that is, the last moment before death. The greatest performances of Hajas always reflected that risky, self-torturing and immensely merciless situation when someone does not want to die but to show himself and others the last moment before death.” *Emergency Landing: Tibor Hajas’ Oeuvre – an interview by Júlia Várad* on Radio Kossuth (22. jun 2005. Wednesday 14:33) [http://www.radiohu/index.php?cikk\\_id=141801](http://www.radiohu/index.php?cikk_id=141801) (Date of Access: 2006.08.23) Trans. by Peter Bocsor.

<sup>7</sup> For more about this performance see pictures of Tibor Hajas after *Psyche*, in *Image Whipping. Tibor Hajas’ (1946-1980) Photo Works with János Vitéz*. Edited by László BEKE, Research Institute for Art History of the Hungarian Academy of Sciences, Budapest, 2004, 134-139.

<sup>8</sup> “Tibor Hajas’ independent insert – a self-destructive performance, hara-kiri combined with an explosion, a white flash of lightning in the darkness.” László BEKE: Gábor Bódy’s connections, in László BEKE – Miklós PETERNÁK (eds.): *Gábor Bódy 1946-1985. A presentation of his work*, Palace of Exhibitions – Central Board of the Hungarian Cinematography, Ministry of Culture, Budapest, 1987, 135.

<sup>9</sup> In Hajas’ case the light was often produced with burning magnesium as in the early days of photography.

<sup>10</sup> “He willingly applies flashing magnesium light, which he sees as the synonym of existence, as a short discernment (*Conciliation*, 1978; *Chöd*, 1979). The delusion of the blinding light is a sign of break in the long darkness, a momentary pain, the metaphor of redemption.” Bálint SZOMBATHY or Karen ELIOT: *Redemption on the balk of death*. Summarizing exhibition of Tibor Hajas’ art, *Új Művészet [New Art]*, 2005, august. <http://www.uj-muveszet.hu/archivum/2005/augusztus/szombathy.htm> (Date of Access: 30.08.2006.)

and its history, between the artist's utopian idea of reaching present time and escaping from a laden past, between presence and writing, between an absolute state of originality without antecedents and repetition, de Man uses a system of metaphors which relates immediately to our subject I mean light or rather electricity.

*We are touching here upon the radical impulse that stands behind all genuine modernity when it is not merely a descriptive synonym for the contemporaneous or for a passing fashion. Fashion (mode) can sometimes be only what remains of modernity after the impulse has subsided, as soon – and this can be almost at once – as it has changed from being an incandescent point in time into a reproducible cliché, all that remains of an invention that has lost the desire that produced it. Fashion is like the ashes left behind by the unlikely shaped flames of the fire, the trace alone revealing that a fire actually took place.<sup>11</sup> (Italics mine. M.A.)*

Let me make a little digression for the sake of reading a part of Nietzsche's text. If we read it we can easily find some examples that support de Man's reading. For instance after arguing that the only solution to being "men" is to reject being "human-like aggregates", Nietzsche finally turns in an apostrophic manner to those young and "hopeful people" of whom until that point he has spoken of as "they".

*I refer these doubters [in brackets: who neglect his teachings – M.A.] so I refer these doubters to time, which brings all things to light, and, in conclusion, I turn my attention to that society of those who hope, in order to explain to them in an allegory the progress and outcome of their healing, their salvation from the historical sickness, and thus their own history [...] they have become, at this final point of their healing, once again men and have ceased to be human-like aggregates – that is something! There are still hopes! Are you not laughing at that in your hearts, you hopeful ones!<sup>12</sup>*

After this Nietzsche tells in a few words the history of Greeks in an allegory. According to this allegory Greeks learned gradually "to organize the chaos" of their internationally influenced cultural state by listening to the teaching of Delphic oraculum: "Know thyself." Here we see developing the process of self-deconstruction which makes Nietzsche's argumentation weak. How can we be hopeful listeners to Nietzsche's teaching if we see that he is aggregating examples from the past ("allegory", as he says) rather than turning to us exclusively who are in the future? Here his apostrophe as he would say is "weak", isn't it? It is a kind of "death-defying act" which means that this textual performance executed by Nietzsche's text executes Nietzsche's teachings. We may say with de Man that "[m]odernity and history seem condemned to being linked together in a self-destroying union that threatens the survival of both."<sup>13</sup>

Closing this textual excursion which was made not innocently at all on my part I must confess that I took Nietzsche as an appropriate example (or allegory) for what happens in Hajas'

performances. I mean there is a self-deconstructing movement in Hajas' performances too, an aporetic one which makes them "weak" in the Nietzschean sense. Hajas' claim to originality is totally a modern myth implying a desire for being present and neglecting history or temporality, textuality or mediality in the real act of a lightning performance. And if I say that this project fails the question is how it fails in the case of the performance, specifically in the case of Hajas? Let me reflect these falls in evoking some of his performances. First I refer here to the performance called *Psyche*. I cited László Beke's opinion about the performance as an absolute "independent insert" in the film called *Narcissus and Psyche*. Let me say that this assertion can be paired with another one written by Vera Baksa-Sóós, who was the curator of Hajas' exhibition directed a year ago in the Budapest Ludwig Museum. "Hajas was able to entirely separate himself from the dominant artistic traditions."<sup>14</sup> These opinions completed with the term *detachment* used by Hajas are supporters of the mythical picture of a death-defying and at the same time self-destructive performer, who really burnt himself when acting out the performance in front of cameras shooting the film in Czecho-Slovakia, Cervena Lhota. Yes, if we recall the film-scene, at first glance we can see the sky at night full of stars. The next picture shows the performer in white clothes sitting in the empty dark space as if he was independent of everything. That scene could be the relevant allegory of being absolutely separated from the world. But after a few seconds in which we see him manipulating something with his hands, the scene become enlightened by explosions, and we realize that he is sitting in middle of a (battle)field. And then the matter burnt by him with a match explodes in his lap repeating the explosions behind him almost simultaneously. He collapses and the sequence ends. We must not forget that the individual magnesium-explosion by Hajas is a repetition of the explosions behind him in a fictive scene imitating real space and time of war as catastrophe.<sup>15</sup> This is as if we saw a process of what always happens, i.e. the fable of becoming contextual, repetitive and associative or allusive, here paradoxically in the light of explosions. So in my opinion this is neither an independent insert nor an absolutely separate action, and the total detachment as catastrophe which is in the centre of Hajas' oeuvre will never arrive.

I would like to mention two further performances by Hajas. In both of them he uses technical equipment and an environment with the help of which he paradoxically tries to detach himself and his audience from the actuality and this ambivalent gesture injects viruses of "weakness" into his strong that is living actions. Under the word "paradoxically" I mean that his being intensively in presence fails precisely because of the technical support. In both cases he speaks to his audience from a tape-recorder. In the performance called *Conciliation* Hajas' body was tied up in one end of the stage in a dark room, and the flame which started from him ran through a firing-tape until it reached and burnt the magnesium at the other end of the stage. During this time the viewers heard the voice of Hajas speaking to them from a tape-recorder.<sup>16</sup> And this voice without body speaks:

<sup>14</sup> Dr. Vera Baksa-Sóós: Emergency Landing. An homage to Tibor Hajas, in Tibor Hajas: *Emergency Landing*, Catalogue of the Exhibition of Tibor Hajas, Ludwig Museum (Museum of Contemporary Art) (16.06.2005. – 04.09.2005.), (Without numbering pages.)

<sup>15</sup> I mean the II. World War because immediately preceding this scene we can hear Hitler's hysterical voice speaking on radio.

<sup>16</sup> Károly Szűcs: Body and picture. Tibor Hajas Exhibition, *Balkon Art Journal*, [http://www.balkon.hu/balkon05\\_06/02szucs.html](http://www.balkon.hu/balkon05_06/02szucs.html)  
For more pictures about "Conciliation. Action in College Bercsényi (18.12.1978.); Magnesium Painting" see *Image Whipping. Tibor Hajas' (1946-1980) ...*, 96-99.

<sup>11</sup> Paul de Man: Literary History and Literary Modernity, in Paul de Man: *Blindness and Insight. Essays in the Rhetoric of Contemporary Criticism*, Introduction by Wlad Godzich, University of Minnesota Press, Minneapolis, 1983, 147.

<sup>12</sup> Friedrich Nietzsche: *On the Use and Abuse of History for Life*, trans. by Ian Johnston, see <http://www.mala.bc.ca/~johnstoi/Nietzsche/history.htm> (Downloaded: 29.08.2006.)

<sup>13</sup> De Man, 151.

Here and now you have again done something for which you seem to have an innate need; you have suspended your fates for a while to participate in a hallucination, an event which, excitingly, happens to you, but only to your senses, not to your fates; [...] it leaves no trace, just a faint glimmer. The time you spend here is not real; it is not measured by any movement or life; it is a black hole in which you disappeared [...] a single moment suffices for a catastrophe. I am deliberately taking my time; deliberately holding you up. Holding you up, to give catastrophe a better chance. I would like catastrophe to strike you while you are wasting your time here. I would make these moments valuable; significant, set apart, unique. It would give them weight. [...] When you came here, you offered the chance to keep you here. I will take the responsibility for this now; I am keeping you all here. I want to make you feel cut off from the world, for your own good; I have had the doors locked, it is dark. This is in my power. What you participate in is a show of strength. [...] For catastrophe belongs to the select [few or picked men – M.A.]. And once again, you will not be among the select; once again you will get off. You will not get the time, the minutes you can count as your own. Nothing happens to you that you can claim as your own. The two shores of time between which you are now anxiously waiting will soon close in, like a wound. In recompense [or in a different translation: conciliation – M.A.] I can only offer what is mine. My own time. This. Here. Now. Here, whatever happens, happens only to me. My time really passes. Time that can be weighed and measured. I am losing something in earnest, instead of you. This must suffice. In this way your time can be measured too – if only through the moments of [my – M.A.] time.<sup>17</sup>

In the case of an ideal presence of performance there are two conditions which should be completed at least according to Marco De Marinis' definition. First "the real physical co-presence of sender and addressee", second the "simultaneity of production and communication".<sup>18</sup> But as far as we see in Hajas' case the simultaneity and co-presence fail, and communication breaks down. To be honest with you I have to admit that I would be embarrassed if I had to count the possible realizations of the presence in the performance called *Conciliation*. Is it the presence of the performer's body on the stage? Or is it the presence of the tape, i.e. the moment of *sending* sound-message? Or is it the moment of *getting* the sound-message? Do we have to calculate up an accumulation of different present times or an *escalation* of one? (Or *aggregation* in Nietzsche's term.) Was there a moment which in its clearness wouldn't have been contaminated by any trace or sign? Let me ask whether this is a concrete action ruled by the perfect presence of body and soul of the performer, or is it an abstract one in so far as it falls into different and inorganic montage-like parts? This latter seems to me true, since the consciousness finally appears in the form of an abstract and disembodied voice detached from its origin. From this point of view this realization of happening inevitably leads us from the symbolic and organic concept of

happening to the sign-like allegoric nature of it in sense of Walter Benjamin or even Nietzsche.

The same embarrassing event happened in the performance called *Vigil*, in which the performer attempted to overtake the presence in a modernist and extreme competition, and talked to himself lying on the floor unconsciously. In other words he posted his own voice from the past (or the present) to himself in the future (or in the present). The next passage is from the description of the performance:

*The performer, unconscious now, lies alone in front of the wall. Then suddenly the lights go up in the hall [...] The speakers begin to operate; the voice of the performer can be heard from a tape. While he is talking, his assistants mop the water, unchanged in the meantime, from the floor with the helpless body. He is dragged about, he is laid down now and then. The voice falls silent; the body lies motionless in the light. The audience is sent out of the hall, the performer is brought round.<sup>19</sup>*

There's no doubt that this is not a detachment in the original sense of Hajas' intention, even if it was the artist's aim. It seems that the absolute decontextualization which would mean the capability of being totally present is impossible just because of the performer's own effort to be detached paradoxically by running "ahead" in time with the help of technical reproduction. This kind of detachment erases the living and organic *corporealism* and makes an inhuman montage of it. At this final point of my paper I refer to Antonin Artaud, whom we know as the prototype of performance art since he was intransigent in performing on the stage always in present time without any repetition. But in opposition to his intransigency he performed a radio-speech in 1947 entitled "To Have Done with the Judgment of God" which was broadcasted only after his death.<sup>20</sup> In reference to this detachment Wolfgang Hagen says in his writing about Artaud's radio work that "[t]he separation of the voice from the body is precisely what the technical reality of radio has always done". From this point of view maybe we should speak about Hajas' performances as "radio-plays" in which the artificial organ as a microscopic pest scratched out of the body itches the living performance to death as Artaud would say. In these actions Hajas is neither "toward-death" nor out of time and space. My thesis is that in these actions his image is "dead" from the very beginning even if he was alive, and his image could not be more dead if he committed suicide on the stage.<sup>21</sup>

<sup>17</sup> Tibor Hajas: *Conciliation*, trans. by: J.E. Sollosy, in *Tibor Hajas (1946 – 1980)...* (Without numbered pages. There is no translator signed.)

<sup>20</sup> Wolfgang Hagen: *Artaud and the Serialization of Radio*, see <http://whagen.de/publications/2006/BremenArtaud/HagenEnglischFertig.htm> (Date of Access: 03.09.2006.) "Man is sick because he is poorly constructed. / The decision must be made to expose him in order to scratch out that microscopic pest that itches him to death – God, that is, and with God his organs. / So tie me up if you want to / But there is nothing less useful than an organ. / When you have made man a body without organs, then you will have liberated him from all of his automatisms as well, and given him his true freedom back. / And then you will teach him to dance the other way round, as in the delirium of a *bal musette*. / And this verso will be his true recto". Antonin Artaud: *To Have Done with the Judgment of God*, translation by Judith Rosenthal.

<sup>21</sup> I express my gratitude to the Artpool Archive which is an Art Research Center in Budapest for placing the Hajas-performances on DVD at my disposal. (For additional matters of Hungarian and international neo-avantgarde art see the website of the Artpool Archive: [www.artpool.hu](http://www.artpool.hu).) Special thanks for the assistance of Thomas Hoover, who proofread the English text of my paper. I did my research on Hajas' art as a scholar in the frame and with the help of OTKA, Hungary (Hungarian Scientific Research Fund).

<sup>17</sup> Tibor Hajas: *Conciliation*, trans. by: J.E. Sollosy, in *Tibor Hajas (1946 – 1980) Memorial Exhibition*, Székesfehérvár, István Király Museum, 1987. The Publications of István Király Museum, series D. n. 175. (Without numbering pages.)

<sup>18</sup> Marco De Marinis: "The Performance Text", in Henry BIAL (ed.): *The Performance Studies Reader*, Routledge, London – New York, 2004, 235. – I must add that what is strange is that De Marinis emphasizes his pragmatic approach, but I suspect that in case of the concrete performances this approach would be idealistic and therefore exclusive.

## WHAT CAN ACT AS STIMULI IN THE CREATIVE PROCESS?

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### Introduction

No one will deny the diversity to be found in the art forms of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. Yet some say they are difficult to understand. Others go so far as to say that art has reached its limits and has no future. However, we cannot stop creating even should the concept of art disappear. In the following paper we are not dealing with a definition of art or discussing what exactly art is. Our aim is to come up with a model of the creative process from the point of view of the creator. It is not intended for interpreters but for those who create works of art.

In this paper we shall lay emphasis on perception. Because the original meaning of *aisthesis* is perception, the model we shall try to form is called an aesthetic model of the creative process.

In order to arrive at the correct model we shall divide the creative process into three stages: 1<sup>st</sup>. Things that act as stimuli for creative work; 2<sup>nd</sup>. Selection of those stimuli; 3<sup>rd</sup>. Actual use of them at the constructive stage. We shall examine these stimuli from the point of view of the present: the "Now" is important in our model. We are not concerned with the psychology of the creator nor with the duration of the creative process itself.

**I.** What can become a stimulus to create a work of art? The answers are varied. It could be a rose, painting materials, techniques involved in perspective or a fugue. Then again it could be an event, swans for example flying in a beautiful sunset. Everything perceived can become a stimulus to create. Of course it is impossible to describe in words everything we perceive. Nevertheless, even if we cannot describe the scene which is in front of our eyes, we do indeed perceive it, and it can become a stimulus toward creating. These stimuli are limited to what we can perceive so we must first analyze the notion of perception.

Let us take the sense of sight as an example. According to current research, when we see an object, the brain processes its colors, shapes and movements, but the steps involved do not have the same time span. The processing speed for color is approximately 60ms–80ms faster than that for movement. All the information is integrated in the visual cortex. This is all part of the research now being carried out in the field of brain mapping.

However, not everything we perceived can be categorized as being grasped by one or other of the five senses. And by that we do not mean that there is such a thing as ESP or telepathy. Aristotle's categories are not always precise from the neurobiological point of view. For instance we have a sense of balance (Equilibrioception) or proprioception. In fact, scholars are still discussing how many senses we do have.

Besides, it is still not clear how the pieces of information sent to the brain are interconnected. Certain people "feel" the color of an object while they smell it. (1) Such perception is called synaesthesia, and all babies have this way perceiving things. But the mechanism behind this has not yet been investigated. The ground we stand on or the chair we sit on may vibrate when we listen to a pipe organ played in church. We feel not only the tones but also this vibration. Continuing research may explain these perceptions some day and they may then be studied as stimuli for the creative act, but we are not dealing with this mechanism in the present paper.

Now, as we were saying, it is completely impossible to describe in words everything perceived. A painting, for example, may be so beautiful it defies any attempt to describe it. The picture is relayed to the brain as visual information, even if we cannot find words for it. According to the neurobiologist Semir Zeki, the reason is that the mechanism of seeing an object is far more complex than that employed in speaking. The length of time it took to develop the sense of sight is far greater than the time it took to develop language. What we perceive visually in a picture can be a stimulus toward the act of creating, independently of how the picture can be described in words.

**II.** The stimuli that lead an artist to create, are confined to things we perceive here and now. Let us say that you and a friend are gazing up at the stars and you look down for a moment, just as a meteor passes overhead. Your friend sees it but you miss it. The meteor cannot become a stimulus for you because you did not perceive it. Likewise, if your friend says nothing about it, you will not be moved to create anything related to that event. Only in so far as your friend tells you about the meteor will you be able to grasp the occurrence.

Our powers of perception, therefore, are limited to things and events of the here and now. We cannot perceive past events or what is occurring in some distant place at present. But if the



information is stored in some form and transmitted to you, then it can become a stimulus for creative activity on your part.

This information about the past or what is going on in a distant place may be found in some storage media but not all of it will become stimuli for you. Only that information which you yourself perceive can become a creative stimulus.

Furthermore, the universe and everything around us is in motion: nothing remains static even for a moment. (Figure II-1) We should note, therefore, that changes in the storage media can affect the condition of the stored information. Let us take fossils as an example. The conditions for something to become fossilized are so difficult that fossilization is a rare phenomenon. If a species has become extinct without leaving even one specimen in a fossilized state, then that species is beyond our ken. It is possible that a specimen is hidden in some earth layer somewhere but we can know nothing about it till it is excavated. (Figure II-2)

The world is dynamic. A past event is grasped only in the form in which it is transmitted to us at this moment. If it was not stored somewhere or if the stored information was lost en route it cannot become a stimulus for creative activity.

**III.** Here let us take some concrete examples. Try to recall what happened around you this time yesterday. If you have a clear memory of it, then it can become a stimulus for creative activity. Of course some of the details may not have been perceived and stored in your brain. In short, you may have lost the information. And then again, even what we did perceive and store in our memory doesn't always correctly reflect the happening. We often make mistakes and wrong guesses. But even these can become stimuli.

Memories are being constantly renewed. Whatever the information stored in the brain is recalled, it undergoes a change, to a greater or lesser degree. The information stored in the brain is not stable. The more time passes the greater is the possibility that the stored information has undergone a change.

Stimuli create are not confined to knowledge stored in your brain. Let us say you read an article in this morning's newspaper describing an event that took place somewhere in the world. The correspondent heard of the event or actually witnessed it, stored it in his brain and then wrote his article. Then, although you were not present at the event, your reading of this article can become a stimulus for creative activity on your part. Or it could happen that the correspondent and you are at the same event at the same time. In this case the report written by the pressman may not be the same as the information you have stored concerning the same event. Nevertheless, his article, when you come up to read it, can become a stimulus for creative activity on your part.

Consider the following example. You attended a party with your friends or family yesterday evening. You drank too much and cannot recall now what happened there. Your friends, however, have a clear memory of it all. The point to note here is that last night's party can become a creative stimulus for you depending on the information your friends relay to you. Maybe one of them wrote it up in his diary and you read it there afterwards.

We cannot know how other people perceived an event, nor how it is stored in their memory, nor what changes the information undergoes there. This whole process must remain in "the black box," so to speak, until the experts complete their research on the mechanism of perception. At the moment we can seize

only the information that has found expression in some way.

The information expressed by someone may not always reflect an event correctly, and yet it can become an artistic, creative stimulus. You can take it up just as it is and base some creation on it. Numerous artists, for instance, based their works on the geocentric theory of the universe, although it was quite wrong. The theory as it was given them had been their stimulus. We know now that the heliocentric theory is the correct one but there is nothing to stop us composing music based on the old geocentric idea. Either theory can be a stimulus for creative activity and we can choose one or both at will.

Gustav Holst composed *The Planets* between 1914 and 1916. Pluto has not been discovered yet. Holst's knowledge of the solar system was lacking something but that did not interfere with his creation. Later, even when Pluto had taken its place among the planets he did not compose a movement for it. The British composer, Colin Matthews (1946 - ) commissioned by the Hallé orchestra, wrote a movement called *Pluto, the Renewer* in the year 2000. Then, in this august this year (2006) the International Astronomical Union changed its definition of a planet and Pluto was demoted.

Now how do you indeed to use the planets in your work as an artist?

**IV.** Based on the arguments set out above we have listed here the things that can be stimuli for creative, artistic activity.

- 1) The world which we perceive directly at this present moment. (Figure IV-1)
- 2) The content of our memory just as it stands now i.e. the information stored there at the present moment. It may have changed, however, since the time you first stored it. (Figure IV-2)
- 3) The information an artist is here and now expressing while he or she continues simultaneously to perceive some object or event directly; e.g. a sketch or a photo. (Figure IV-3)
- 4) The present state of something the artist perceived directly in the past, stored in the memory and then expressed or exteriorized. (Figure IV-4)
- 5) Present state of information expressed by someone other than the artist, as they were simultaneously and directly perceiving an object or an event. (Figure IV-5)
- 6) The information which someone other than the artist had acquired from perceiving something directly in the past and then storing it in the memory and later giving expression to it in some form. (Figure IV-6)
- 7) The present state of information which has been stored automatically in a machine rather than in the human brain. (Figure IV-7)

Possible stimuli for creative, artistic activity are limited to these seven headings. All of them concern what we perceive here and now as we go about our work of creating. The concept of the "here and now" is vital to our model of the creative process.

**V.** Here let us take some more examples. Let us assume that you went on a trip to the Piazzetta San Marco (Venice) ten years ago. Because you have a talent for painting, you not only took up photographs,

you also made some sketches. The Piazza San Marco impressed you deeply. You have had, however, no opportunity to visit this place since then. And now you wish to create a work based on the Piazza San Marco. What will become the stimuli for your creation in this case?

- a) Your present memories. Your memories may have changed over the ten years but the stimulus for your creation will be your memory as it now stands.
- b) You found some of your sketches in the cellar. They are partly discolored probably because they were not well preserved. In this case the discolored sketches could be your stimuli. The lost photos cannot. But you might find a booklet you bought there at the time in the Piazza. The photos in that could become your stimuli.
- c) The Piazza San Marco may have changed during those ten years. If you do not stand now on the Piazza, the present condition of it cannot be a stimulus for your work.
- d) If you watch a live broadcast of the Piazza San Marco, it can be a stimulus.
- e) During the ten years you may have read books concerning the Piazza. If so, your memory of those books can become stimuli for your creative activity. If you read them again, the refreshed information will become an added stimulus.
- f) Let us say you have recorded on DVD a documentary made five years ago. Some parts of the documentary are not up to date but it can become, nevertheless, a stimulus to create. The DVD recording will not be as faded as on VHS.
- g) Let us say you took a trip to Washington D.C. three years ago and visited the National Gallery of Art. By coincidence you had the opportunity of admiring works by Canaletto (1697-1768) on view there. His Painting, *Piazza San Marco*, was completed sometime between 1735 and 1740. Now you cannot experience directly what took place more than 200 years ago in the Piazza San Marco, and the condition of the painting may have changed over that period no matter how well it is preserved. The condition of the painting you admired three years ago cannot be compared to the original state of the painting as it came from Canaletto's brush. Nevertheless, the information stored in your brain can become a stimulus toward creative activity.

**VI.** The earlier works of art are a veritable storehouse of stimuli for new works of art. Artists find stimuli in the works of former masters.

Lord Burlington, for instance, modeled his *Chiswick House* (1725-1729) on Palladio's *La Rotonda* (1566-69). Picasso found stimuli for much of his work in Velasquez's *Las Meninas* (1656). Goya and Dali also found ideas in *Las Meninas*.<sup>(2)</sup> Tolstoy wrote his novel *The Kreutzer Sonata* (1889) on the basis of what he felt in the violin sonata (1803) which Beethoven composed for Rodolphe Kreutzer. Later, Janáček composed the string quartet *Kreutzer* on the basis of Tolstoy's novel.

The standpoint of the artist, the creator, is completely different from that of the viewer and critic. If the viewers, admirers or critics see only a copy of a certain work of art, their activity cannot generally be called "appreciation" or "understanding" of the original work. On the other hand, Utrillo painted many pictures relying only on postcards of scenes in Montmartre. Rembrandt drew sketches based on Da Vinci's *The Last Sup-*

*per*, but he added a dog, something that does not appear in the original. According to Kenneth Clark, Rembrandt's sketch is based on the reproduction someone executed in Venice in the 16th century.

In 1870 the Vienna librarian, Carl Pohl, showed Brahms a certain *Divertimento*. At that time it was thought to be the work of Haydn. In 1873 Brahms composed *Haydn Variations* based on the *Divertimento*. Current research, however, has found that this *Divertimento* was probably not composed by Haydn but by Ignatz Pleyel (1757-1831).

These examples show that it is not always necessary for creators to interpret and analyze earlier works correctly. The important point is that earlier works can become stimuli for creative activity independent of a correct analysis or interpretation of them. What you perceive now might be discolored postcards, poor copies of masterpieces of masterpieces or pictures with a counterfeit signature. In as much as you are perceiving them "now," they can become stimuli for creative activity on your part. (3)

**VII.** Where do artists find stimuli for their creations? There is no simple answer to this question. The examples cited above are only a tiny part of it. Actually, the whole world is a treasure-house of stimuli.

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### (ENDNOTES)

<sup>1</sup> Kandinsky is an example of this kind of perception.

<sup>2</sup> Goya's *Las Meninas* was completed in 1778. In 1957 Picasso painted 58 works related to Velasquez's *Las Meninas*. Dali also produced a work he called *Las Meninas* in 1985.

<sup>3</sup> Their own earlier work also can become a stimulus for artists to create something new. For example, we might think of Rodin's *The Gates of Hell*. Rodin put *The Thinker* (1880) into this gate. These examples show us what roles, sketches, drafts and manuscripts have in the creative process. Earlier steps in the creative process can themselves become stimuli for further steps in our creation. This is a very important aspect of the creative process, especially when we are dealing with a huge work such as Rodin's "Gate" or Rubens' pictures.



## FRENCH PERSONALISM: ITS INFLUENCE ON THE THOUGHT OF THE SLOVENE WRITER M. ROŽANČ

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French Personalist movement has had considerably less influence over Slovene literature as close French Existentialism did. In the 1930s the ideas of French Personalism were brought to Slovene cultural thought and to literature by E. Kocbek; in sixties and eighties they appeared in the essays of the prominent Slovene writer Marjan Rožanč (1930–1990). His thought, being revealed in plenty of essays and notes, shows many various philosophical impacts. One of them is French Personalism.

To understand the fact why French Personalism was not so familiar in Slovenia we have to highlight some historical items. Before World War II this was partially the consequence of the fact that Slovene culture had been inclined towards the German and the Austrian ones. Namely, the Slovenian region had been an integral part of Austria and then Austro-Hungarian monarchy until the collapse of the monarchy in 1918.<sup>1</sup> Their tradition could not just fade in a few years. The inclination to the German and Austrian cultures which had been lasted for centuries could not be changed in some years when in 1918 the majority of present-day Slovenia became a part of the new-established Monarchy of the Serbs, Croats and Slovenes (the SHS Monarchy).

The '20s brought the first breakthrough of the Personalist thought into the Slovene region, in accordance with the above-mentioned from Germany, not from France. The so-called crusader movement was influenced by the German youth movement, led by the German philosopher and theologian Romano Guardini.<sup>2</sup> The catastrophe of the World War I had led Guardini up to the idea of the moral renovation of Germany and of the role of a Christian as well. The Slovene crusader movement was also a cultural, social and political one; its core was the magazine of the Slovene Christian youth *Križ na gori* (The Cross on the Mountain, first published in 1924), or simply *Križ* (The Cross) as the magazine

was re-named later. From its very beginning it was Christian and Socialist at the same time. Its aim was to entirely and wholly improve a human, society and Christianity. In 1928, when *The Cross on the Mountain* was re-named into *The Cross*, its editor became Edvard Kocbek. From 1938 to 1943 he was the editor of the cultural, Christian-Leftist orientated magazine with the characteristic name *Dejanje* (The Act). Because of their rather progressive ideas both crusader movement and *The Act* circle were occasionally coming into conflicts with the then Catholic Church and the clerical politics. In the thirties Kocbek met Emmanuel Mounier, one of the key personalities of French Personalism, in Paris. The friendship between him and Mounier marked him intensively. In the following years Kocbek revealed his cultural and social-political thought in such way that he was later considered as one of the main Slovene thinkers, influenced by French Personalism.<sup>3</sup>

After the World War II, the victorious Communist regime in Yugoslavia was not in favor neither of French Personalist thought nor of near French Existentialism. Furthermore, official position was very negative. Nevertheless, in the late fifties and in the sixties, more ambitious and progressive currents in Slovene literature were strongly influenced by French Existentialism. Existentialist themes were included and developed in the literary works by the main Slovene writers of the second half of the twentieth century. Among them, literary history often quotes Rožanč, especially with his early works (plays and short stories).

The Slovene reception of French Existentialism in a wider sense can thus be observed in two phases. The first are the thirties, when the ideas of Christian Existentialism dominated, and the second is the period after the World War II with the domination of the non-teistic Existentialism. In both periods the new ideas were raised in the young intellectuals' and artists' circles which deliberately tended to transcend the institutionalized and ossified values. In the first phase these were the values of Clerical Catholicism, whereas in the second of the dogmatic Marxism.<sup>4</sup>

<sup>1</sup> From 1809 to 1813 some parts of present-day Slovenia (and Croatia as well), named *Les Provinces Illyriennes*, were under French jurisdiction. After this short intermezzo the territory was occupied by the Austrian troops again.

<sup>2</sup> Cf. Peter Kovačič Peršin: "Uveljavitev personalistične filozofije pri Slovencih", in: P. Kovačič Peršin (ed.): *Personalizem in odmevi na Slovenskem*, Ljubljana: Društvo 2000, 1998.

<sup>3</sup> Matija Ogrin: "Kocbek in Mounier", *Primerjalna književnost*, XX, No. 1, 1997, pp. 1–20.

<sup>4</sup> Marjeta Vasič: *Eksistencializem in literatura*, Ljubljana: Državna založba Slovenije, 1984, p. 66.

French Personalism is often understood within the wider context of contemporary philosophy beginning with Kierkegaard. In general we can say that these philosophical investigations were interested in human person and were trying to define its position in the new conditions of the world. Originating in Latin word 'persona' which meant a theatrical mask and later an actor himself, the term 'person' had been asserted itself firstly in the Christian theology. In the Modern Times-philosophy (for example at Kant) the concept of person was often linked with the ethical problems. Ethical component has gained its importance in French Personalism movement, too.

Distinguishing between French Personalism and other ideas of contemporary philosophy can be a very ungrateful job. The ideas of some thinkers are covering with others, therefore distinguishing can be very demanding and we can also ask ourselves what is the point of doing this. Often raised problem is also the dividing line between Personalism and Existentialism (especially the teistic branch of it) that has not come to an agreement yet. This is important for understanding of Rožanc's ideas, too. It is often almost impossible to track them to their philosophical sources, because in his thought many ideas from different sources are intertwining.

French Personalist movement, as we are interested in, is considered to be a particular movement in France between the World Wars. It was influenced by the philosophers Marcel Blondel, Henri Bergson, Jacques Maritain and the poet Charles Péguy. Its origins can be sought in the left wing of French Catholic culture. It was split into several groups, among them the circle around the magazine *Esprit*, led by Emmanuel Mounier (1905–1950), was the most famous and powerful. The following key features were common to the different groups: firstly, the concept of person, deriving from the Personalism of the Catholic Church, but much more dynamical in French Personalism: a nature of a person is not given beforehand but the person is realizing itself as the person through his acts and choices.<sup>5</sup> The second feature can be recognized in the huge interest of French Personalism for social, economic and political problems. Furthermore, French Personalism was inclined towards radical changes and in its social applications often close to socialism or to the left wing parties.<sup>6</sup>

Mounier's Personalist movement was formed around the magazine *Esprit* which was issued from 1932. The magazine reacted directly to the current social and political events and ideas, circulating in contemporary Europe. The movement was a philosophical, social and a cultural one. During the war, the magazine was prohibited by Vichy's government, but after the end of the war Mounier's Personalism has become one of the leading formers of social and spiritual life of the then France.<sup>7</sup>

In Slovene literature Marjan Rožanc (1930–1990) is considered as one of the notable writers in the twentieth century, especially by his essays. He began writing them in the sixties and then continuously till his death in 1990. The thematic was wide, extending from the culture, politics, ethics, religion, to sport. But in the center of his interest he always placed an individual person, his position in the world and his

attitude toward the transcendence. Rožanc was influenced by many philosophical ideas; French Personalist movement appeared just as one of them. The others were: Kierkegaard, Unamuno, Berdyayev, Dostoyevsky, Pascal, French Existentialism, Kocbek, Gabriel Marcel, Nietzsche, Manichaeism, Teilhard de Chardin, Protestant thought, etc.<sup>8</sup> Dividing the ideas of French Personalism from the other ideas is quite difficult because many of them are deriving from the similar spiritual atmosphere.

Rožanc got in touch with the ideas of French Personalism over Kocbek, who was a friend of Mounier. But inclination to the Personalist ideas was not in the beginnings of Rožanc's writings. As he wrote, he was firstly a communist follower. His faith was not a religious one; he believed in the Socialist Revolution, not in God. His turn apart was due to the political and cultural situation in the sixties. Let us explain this. In the beginning of the sixties Rožanc was the member of the circle around the magazine *Perspektive* (The Perspectives) which was socially, politically and culturally engaged magazine. After 4-year-issuing it was prohibited and abolished by the Communist regime, which had found its activity as a threat to it and began with police investigations and persecutions. In the following years the Slovene cultural and social area was almost closed for the ambitious intellectuals. The disillusion with the public sphere was very strong. Rožanc searched a publishing space abroad and found it in the Italian magazine *Most* (The Bridge). He published there some essays, which can be seen as the necrology to his past faith into the Revolution. He recognized it as the self-deception. The ideas about the Revolution fell down not because of violent intervention of the regime that broke up *Perspektive*, but because of the very nature of the reality itself. In the following years he revealed this fragmentary thought further. His doubt into the "redemptive history", as he called both the Marxist and the Christian faith into the redemption somewhere around the future, was summed up in his concept of "self-abolition of humanism". Since the Modern Times a man has been tending to get more and more freedom from God. Finally he has managed to become Human-God. He has proclaimed himself as the creator of the world, believing only in himself, respectively in the different incarnations of himself, i.e. ideology, institution, humanism. But the consequences of the freedom are different as he was expecting. The solid foundation, given to the man by the confessional religion, has been broken. The man is turned upside down by something, which is reliably stronger than him. In his first essays Rožanc named this force as the hidden principles of the nature itself, later he wrote about the god and the devil as the two equivalent forces, manipulating with a man. As we can see, this is Rožanc's first step to his religious faith, deriving therefore from the disillusion of his faith into the Revolution and action.

The exits out of the condition of the weakened man can be two: the first is that the man tries to keep the self-deception about his own control over everything; example of this attitude is belief into an ideology. The second exit, which is ethically much more worthy, is the man who has acknowledged

<sup>5</sup> As we can see this characteristic is similar to the Existentialist view.

<sup>6</sup> Ogrin, "Kocbek in Mounier", p. 3.

<sup>7</sup> Edvard Kovac: "Personalizem Emmanuela Mounierja", in: E. Mounier: *Oseba in dejanje*, Ljubljana: Društvo 2000, 1990, p. 240.

<sup>8</sup> Cf. Marjan Rožanc: *Roman o knjigah*, Ljubljana: Slovenska matica, 1983, p. 150; Marjan Rožanc: *Manihejska kronika*, Ljubljana: Mladinska knjiga, 1990, pp. 116–117; France Pibernik: *Čas romana: Pogovori s slovenskimi pisatelji*, Ljubljana: Cankarjeva založba, 1983, p. 194.

and admitted the paradoxical inner structure of the world and of his own insufficient nature. The man is continually and dialectically crucified between two extreme positions. One is static, contemplative, of despair, the other is alive, active and changeable. Such incompleteness is even his deep moral imperative, he should persist in it, i.e. in the open gaze of the pretentious truth of the reality itself.

After revealing some basic Rožanč's ideas, let's return to French Personalism. As Mounier defined in his writings, Personalist movement derived from the ascertainment of the economic and spiritual crisis in the modern society. The crisis was discovered as the crisis of the social-political structures, as also of a man. The solutions, offered by Marxist Materialism and, on the other hand, by spiritualism, made appear that were not sufficient. Both attitudes were exclusive for a man, since they forgot important parts of his personality. The concept of the person, as Mounier developed it, seems to offer a better solution: it unites physical and spiritual part of human being together. At the same time Mounier stressed the role of such individual persons: they should unite with each other in a community and therefore transcend their individualism and self-containment. Individualism is criticized very sharply at Mounier; in his opinion it signifies the chief ideology of western bourgeois society, therefore it links it with Capitalism. According to Mounier, such individualist sees himself as God. He does not care for the other person, i.e. for the society. Upon influence of Gabriel Marcel (Rožanč was also under direct influence of Marcel) he exposes "to be" instead of "to have". The true position is the existence in the co-operation with other people and with God, not in objectifying the people, the world and himself. Objectified people are not socially engaged, concludes Mounier upon Marcel's thoughts.

The basic concern of Personalism is therefore to decentralize an individual and prepare him to create the society with others. This is the process that should be won somewhere in the future. A man should open himself to the others, offer himself to the society. Personalism, as Mounier understands it, is therefore individual and collective at the same time: his person has to be responsible for himself and for the other persons, too.

Rožanč's salvation for the human in the decayed contemporary world also tends to the connection of people. "Creatura dei", the creature of God, as he names the realized person, tends to exist in a symbiosis with other persons. Only in their direct contacts with other people a full variety of possibilities can open. Availability for the other persons is a kind of a rescue for a man, who has become conscious of self-confidence of the humanism. In this kind of the world, in which the place for God is empty now, the values are emerging directly in people's relations, here and now.

Rožanč's communities are always small: the smallest one is of two. Lovers are searching the way to each other in a sexual act; during this process a lover is trying to escape from himself – his own insufficiency and mortality – and approach to the other. But the attempt to unite with the other lover – in fact, to become God – is something that never can be fully won. The other example of community is a collective sport game, i.e. a football game. This is an example how community should function: as in Mounier's community of free and responsible persons the persons in a football game are free and creative.

Rožanč's ideas of person are close to Mounier's, but some differences seem to appear in the problem of social engagement. Rožanč's ideas were rooted in his distrust for any institution and society-improvement projects. After his (and collective) disappointment in cultural life the very ground of his new-revealed thought became the paradox appearing in every single thing in the world. The duality deriving from the paradox is also something morally valuable: it means an aspiration to democracy, pluralism, etc. These were the deep values of Rožanč's thought. He was strictly against direct social engagement which tended to change the face of the society to improve it because he didn't believe in it. In his background his negative experience of the Yugoslav socialism lay. Mounier's and French Personalism's experience was different: a bourgeois society was the society they lived in, and their ideas of the improvement of the society were much more utopian.

But this is not everything. Rožanč's attitude towards engagement in fact does not separate him from French Personalism as it appeared to be at first glance. Let me explain this. Rožanč's engagement in current problems of Slovene society and politics was of different kind. It was different in a sense that he was appearing alone, not organized in a group. Like Mounier, he recognized the crisis in contemporaneity but it appeared to him to be more a spiritual one: he reproached to Slovenes their spiritual emptiness, lack of values and communication between people, scramble for consumer goods, etc. His purpose was in fact moral engagement. Democratization in the widest sense of the word is a positive big value for Rožanč because it understands a human being in all his complexity. This attitude corresponds to his critique of any uniformity, in fact, any oneness. His recognition of a man and of the nature of the world which is paradoxically structured can be viewed as against any reduction into any system. He wants to show the true structure of the world although he knows all the time that it is constantly looping and dynamically falling into the paradoxes, so it cannot be shown because it is not a structure. From this point of view Rožanč's moral engagement has to be observed.

But we have to claim that even Mounier did not believe very deep in social engagement. He was aware that the goals of the politics are limited (as he described them in his manifesto *Révolution personaliste et communautaire*, 1930). The Revolution is not something we can believe it. According to the Christian moment of Personalism Mounier emphasized also meditation and humility of a person. These can hardly be a part of the Revolution.

We can conclude that Rožanč was aware of Mounier's ideas but they were put into different conditions he was deriving from, and intertwined with the impacts of other philosophers and thinkers.

# THE AESTHETIC OF EVERYDAY SPACE IN THE ANCIENT MEDITERRANEAN: THE 'COURTYARD' IN THE ROMAN HOUSE

Lale ÖZGENEL

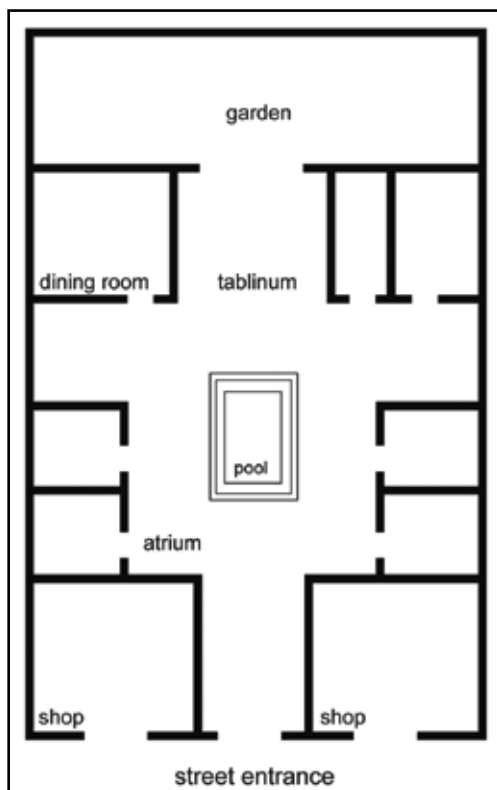
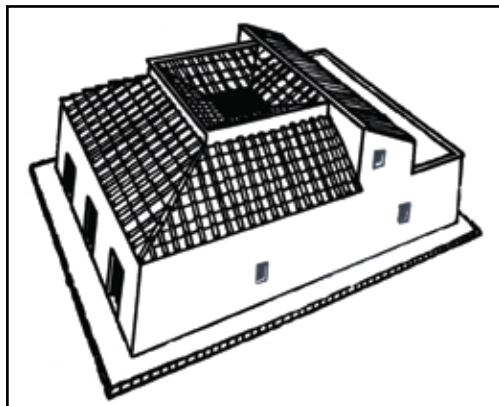
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## Introduction

The exceptional preservation status of several single-family houses in ancient Pompeii and Herculaneum provides an opportunity for studying the architecture and spatiality of the ancient Roman houses in various thematic frameworks. The plan layout and the architectural characteristics of some recurring spaces in these houses have been discussed and published extensively, especially in the last few decades; more recent studies focused on conceptual themes like privacy and gender.<sup>1</sup> This well preserved ancient housing stock can be fruitfully studied in other perspectives including aesthetics. In this paper, respectively, I will address and make a preliminary discussion of the design and use of Roman domestic context from the perspective of 'spatial aesthetics' and 'visual pleasure' by focusing on the spatiality of two types of courtyards, the atrium and the colonnaded garden which are found together in several houses in Pompeii and Herculaneum.<sup>2</sup> The ancient Romans organized these frequently trespassed domestic spaces according to a set of design principles and tools which taken together, indicate the preference of different attitudes to spatial aesthetics in both courtyards.

## Roman Atrium House: Context, Content and Basics

A brief description of the basic plan layout of the ancient Roman single-family house exemplified in Pompeii and Herculaneum is useful for introducing the courtyard scheme, which



*Fig. 1: Schematic ground plan (top) and reconstruction of the earlier version of the atrium house (left)*

is applied in a variety of ways in houses of different scale.<sup>3</sup> This house type is often called also the atrium-house in reference to a semi-open hall placed centrally beyond the entrance vestibule. In the earlier version of this plan all the rooms were lined around and entered from the atrium which also gave access to a small garden at the back (Fig. 1). This was actually a semi-open courtyard with a roof opening at top and a corresponding shall-

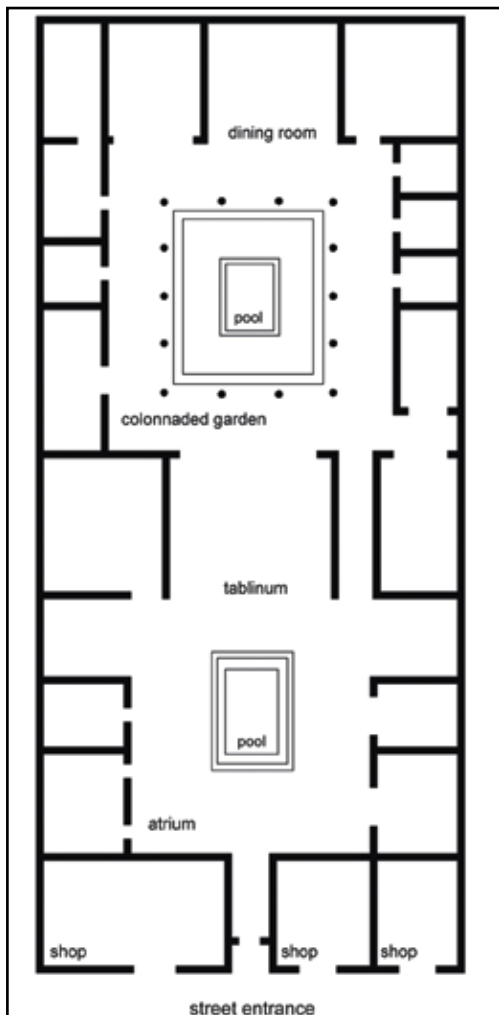


Fig. 2: Schematic ground plan of the modified version of the atrium house with the colonnaded garden

low pool beneath. The walls of the atrium were adorned with frescoes applied on stone masonry while its floor was paved, either with mosaics or stone, thus transforming this inner courtyard into a finely decorated domestic space. The spaciousness and decoration in the atrium could be enriched by statuary, fountains and columns as well.<sup>4</sup> Receiving daylight only from the roof opening and the entrance vestibule, the atrium was an adequately lit space suitable to function as an entrance lobby and hence to absorb and organize the traffic and circulation within the house. The spatial character of this tall, dim, painted, paved and semi-open space was formal; the design of the atrium, planned differently than an open and unpaved domestic courtyard which is airy, well illuminated and thus suitable to serve more comfortably as a setting for landscaping and pastime activities, does not suggest a leisurely use.

According to the ancient literary evidence, the atrium was used as a gathering and waiting area during the traditional

morning greetings which provided an opportunity of communication and conversation in between the owner of the house and his visitors that took place in a decorated and large room, *tablinum*, located opposite the entrance door and accessed from the atrium.<sup>5</sup> In addition, the atrium was also portrayed as the place where, at least in the earlier periods, the family had their meals and where the rituals accompanying the rites of passage such as birth, death, marriage and coming of age were held.<sup>6</sup> These rituals which incorporated a religious performance at the domestic altar that could be found in the atrium also included the participation of visitors. This space used especially to host public occasions such as greetings, business meetings and family celebrations, then, functioned like a spacious guest-room for accommodating household members, friends or visitors on a regularly basis. As a semi-closed and introverted hall with its center marked with water and light the atrium was a spacious, shady, cool and adequately lit setting suitable to be used as the center of activity for more publicly participated and short-term activities.

In its developed version this plan was modified to be arranged sequentially in reference to two courtyards (Fig. 2). The atrium remained as the first courtyard in this scheme. It was still accessed immediately after the entrance vestibule and functioned as the public and the welcoming space in the house. A second spacious courtyard however, was situated at the back of the house and replaced the earlier modest garden.<sup>7</sup> This new courtyard was foremost more private due to its distance from the main entrance and in addition it was also more airy and well illuminated; it was designed as an open and colonnaded garden surrounded with rooms of various use.<sup>8</sup> Different than the paved atrium the colonnaded garden displayed an informal character. Filled with light and greenery this was a more lively area serving as a setting of visual pleasure to the surrounding living and reception rooms. The dining-room which was a lavishly decorated reception and banqueting room for entertaining respected visitors, for example, was often placed such that it was both entered from a portico of this courtyard and also had a view of it. Other private spaces, decorated but not necessarily ceremonial in context, or open sitting alcoves found in this part of the house also had a similar physical connection and spatial and visual extension to the courtyard. The notion of visual extension to an open space, and its bodily experience, indeed, gained primacy in the planning of the Roman house after the incorporation of the colonnaded courtyard, the design of which illustrates best the Roman attitudes towards tuning the spatial aesthetics of domestic setting.

### Colonnaded Courtyard: Design, Visuality and Perception

The colonnaded courtyard, different than the atrium, was actually designed as an 'aesthetic object', as a spatial focus of visual pleasure, to be viewed from different angles and in different ways. This spatial object was composed of two elements: the portico and the central garden area. Each of these two areas had a distinctive spatial character.<sup>9</sup>

### PORTICO

A colonnaded courtyard by definition is designed foremost with rows of columns forming porticoes either on two, three or four sides (Fig. 3). Composed of columns often built with expensive and luxurious materials like marble the porticoes first of all, presented an impressive image to the person stepping into



this area from the dim atrium even in the smaller houses. The portico was actually arranged as a linear space delimited with a row of columns on one side and the walls of the surrounding rooms entered from the portico on the other. A portico was actually a shady walkway providing access to the rooms around but it was wide and spacious enough to grasp and enjoy the view of the central area while walking or standing in it (Fig. 4). This linear space which functioned as a passage, as a walkway, was indeed no less decorated than the spacious reception and living rooms around. The walking experience in a portico was enriched with a paved floor, and with wall-paintings that adorned the exterior walls of the surrounding rooms.

The floors in a Roman house were usually paved with plain or figural mosaic compositions. A portico likewise, often received a colored mosaic pavement as well. In the colonnaded courtyards, it is not infrequent that the pattern of the plain mosaic pavements in a portico could be interrupted in front of a room to incorporate a figural panel and hence to designate both the entrance and the importance of the room. Treated like a symbolic threshold these figural mosaic panels actually were intended to be viewed like wall-paintings with the exception that they were placed on ground and hence looked at from above. The frescoes applied on the exterior walls of the rooms surrounding the portico on the other hand, embellished this long and narrow space in a different way.<sup>10</sup> These frescoes were meant to be viewed from the porticoes, that is, they were specifically placed on the wall surfaces for the view and vision of the walkers. The porticoes could be further embellished by marble reliefs, round shields or masks hung on the flanking walls.<sup>11</sup> Protected underneath the roof of the porticoes the wall-paintings, displayed accessories and floor mosaics were indirectly illuminated with the light coming only from the center of the courtyard which thus provided a changing perception that depended on the movement of the sun and the person. Respectively, three features made the walking experience underneath a portico a little nuanced than walking through the center of a courtyard. First, this experience included and aimed for viewing and looking at surfaces that defined a narrow and horizontally stretching space in a dynamic and moving mode. The surrounding wall and floor surfaces in a portico were conceived and treated as display items but on a larger surface and in a planar and continuous way; thus prompting to perceive them efficiently not from a single or static position but by bodily movement. Second, this experience was based on perceiving the context as a whole in the sense that the displayed items were either at the eye level as in the case of wall-paintings or below it as in mosaics which meant that the viewer, either at a standing or walking mode, was actually exposed to an integrated design that intended to present this linearly stretching, semi-open area as a space in its own right; hence the viewer was also expected to appreciate and experience this total design by looking at all the surrounding surfaces exposed to his/her perception in terms of color, pattern, figure or line (column) as in many other decorated spaces in the house. Third, the portico bordered by a colonnade, which is a porous surface-delimiting element, also offered framed views and vistas to what has been displayed beyond the colonnades, thus enabling to capture different angles and glimpses of the central part of the courtyard.

## CENTRAL AREA

The central area in a colonnaded garden, unlike the portico was arranged not so much to be walked through but rather to be looked at. This area was composed of a number of elements arranged in a certain composition (Fig. 5). Various sorts of greenery, water elements, (a fountain or a pool or both), marble or bronze sculpture and other domestic accessories could constitute the repertoire of this composition.<sup>12</sup> Each of these elements had a complimentary role in contributing to the perception and visibility of the composition and thus presenting it as a designed décor.

Surrounded with porticoes the central area was arranged as a garden and became the main visual focus of the Roman atrium house in its enlarged and modified version:

"The interior gardens characteristic of so many Pompeian houses show considerable variety in their architectural settings, decoration, and plantings, but even here the model was very much a governing factor. At the time of the city's destruction, a rectangular area of planting surrounded by a peristyle was clearly the most desirable form which the interior garden could take. So desirable was this form that there three were created in the Casa del Citarista and one in the Casa della Fortuna at the sacrifice of a considerable amount of potential living space".<sup>13</sup>

A common trend was to place various types of sculpture, most preferably original or copies of well-known Greek pieces, within the greenery, in which case, the original and thus the more expensive item/s might have acted as a secondary focus in the composition.<sup>14</sup> Herms, free-standing statues, sun-dials and rectangular pinakes situated on ornamental pillars could be used as garden accessories.<sup>15</sup> Natural and agricultural deities such as Bacchus, Mars, Venus, Apollo and Diana are among the most preferred free-standing garden statuettes. Satyrs, putti and animal statuettes could be used to complement the compositions. Arranged like a private park these gardens could be small or more impressive in scale, but they were often enriched also with a water element that could act as another visual and auditory focus.

The spatiality of the central décor in the colonnaded courtyard was more pronounced than the atrium and the remaining spaces as it was the most illuminated and brightest spot in the entire house. So taken together, it is plausible to suggest that the central area of the colonnaded courtyard was designed in the manner of an exhibition item to be seen both from the porticoes and the rooms around. What is more, anyone standing in the dim atrium or even at the entrance vestibule, in fact, could have had an opportunity of catching a glimpse of the brightly exposed back garden and the displayed central décor as well:

The scene that met the eyes of the visitor who entered the home of a Roman of means must have been an interesting one. Immediately confronting him was the atrium. Here he would be struck by the contrast of light and shade, the brilliant light entering by way of the compluvium and streaming down upon the pool beneath with its playing fountains and miniature statues. But the sides of the atrium were in shadow, refreshingly cool in the middle of summer. Standing out from this dark background gleamed monolithic columns and an occasional marble figure. Between the columns shrubs in boxes cast islands of still deeper shade...<sup>16</sup>



*Fig. 3: Colonnaded courtyards in the Pompeian Houses: House of the Meleager (left); House of the Tragic Poet (right)*



*Fig. 4: Porticoes in the Pompeian Houses: House of the Golden Cupids (left); House of the Labyrinth (right)*



*Fig. 5: Colonnaded courtyard and the pool in the House of the Colored Capitals, Pompeii (bottom left) (photos on this page published with the permission of Ministero per i Beni e le Attività Culturali – Soprintendenza Archeologica di Pompei).*

Seen in this perspective it is also possible to approach the colonnaded garden as a private gallery, as a private exhibition space in which the porticoes functioned as circulation and viewing venues while the central part as a displayed object, an 'installation'. This display, in fact, could be viewed in two ways. It could be viewed and looked at foremost from various spots in the porticoes, from the eye level of a person standing or walking. Second it could be viewed from the eye-level of a person sitting or reclining in the rooms around. In the latter the gaze of those confined in the surrounding rooms was

limited only to the visual extensions allowed by the opening of the doorways and to the situations when these doors were preferred to be left open; though limited such vistas were often arranged also to focus on a specific element, mostly to a water element or a sculpture, in the central area best seen from a privileged corner in the room, thereby emphasizing the spot chosen by the house owner as a special display within the central composition for his visitors.<sup>17</sup>

### Atrium and Colonnaded Garden: Formal and Casual Attitudes to Spatial Aesthetics

The colonnaded courtyard was treated differently than the atrium which was also a decorated courtyard arranged with a central installation. The rich variety in the central arrangement of this back courtyard was in sharp contrast to that of the first, the atrium, where the central area was marked with a shallow and rectangular pool. This differentiation seems to reflect the functional distinction of these two courtyards. The atrium located immediately after the entrance vestibule was easily accessible and hence more public in character. Therefore it was more suitably located for public oriented events such as business and greeting for which the owner could come together with a group of visitors whose social status and number could vary. In the ancient era work and home were not sharply separated as different spheres of activity and the house was used both as the dwelling and working place which served to reflect and maintain social status. Several outsiders therefore could visit the houses of politically and economically influential citizens to ask for their help, advice, financial support or make political and business deals and arrangements. Although intended as short visits the flow of callers necessitated the presence of a voluminous public space that would accord with the prestige of the owner and that, at the same time, was conveniently located for an easy and short access which would help in controlling the privacy of the remaining areas. Its placement and spatial connection both to the vestibule and the master room (*tablinum*) indeed, suggest that the atrium was an ideal setting to be used for public events. It was spacious and received enough light and air; it had a formal and representative appearance. The central pool in the atrium imposed an ambulation but unlike in the colonnaded courtyard the walking experience in the atrium was not enriched with a central garden installation, and also elapsed and framed with porticoes. Respectively it could efficiently function as a suitable and comfortable welcoming and waiting lounge for short-term visiting or as a spacious family-gathering area for performing domestic rituals rather than as a livelier quarter for accommodating long-term stay and relaxed use.

The colonnaded courtyard on the other hand, was located at the back, relatively less accessible and hence more private. Large and decorated rooms suitable to be used as living rooms for the household or as reception rooms for hosting visitors, as well as semi-open sitting and relaxation niches are generally reserved to this courtyard. Of these the lavishly decorated banqueting-room is often located at this part of the house, usually at the center of one side of the courtyard. The banqueting-room was an important reception space for hosting and entertaining friends, intimates and respected visitors with long and festive banquets. Banqueting, unlike business,

was conceived as an activity of longer duration, often occupying the whole afternoon until sunset. The visitors who came to dine and entertain with the master of the house were expected to stay and hence to share the visual pleasures offered in the house for a longer period of time. The colonnaded garden in this sense, served as a lively theatrical backdrop for the diners who could experience it in different modes and from different angles by walking in the porticoes before and after the banquet or by extending their gaze from their dining couches, through the colonnades, towards the central décor. The visual contact of the diners therefore could well continue, though in a limited manner while they were eating and drinking on their banqueting couches in the dining room as well.

### Conclusions

Both the fully open colonnaded courtyard and the semi-open atrium were not considered merely as spaces of movement, circulation, light and air in the Roman houses exemplified in Pompeii and Herculaneum. They both received spatial emphasis in different ways for they were used in connection to culturally significant domestic activities such as morning salutations or evening banquets which involved participation of visitors coming from different social groups. The spatial and functional significance of these two courtyards was also emphasized and made manifest by means of elaborating their central areas with special arrangements and daylight. As the brightest spots in the house, the shallow pool in the atrium and the decorated garden in the colonnaded court not only provided spatial focus but also a visual one for both the household and the visitors. Of these the back courtyard gave access to rooms which were used more for relaxing, resting and banqueting or in other words for some time-consuming leisure and pastime activities for which it created a visually pleasing atmosphere, an artistic assemblage of colonnade, greenery, water, painting, mosaic and sculpture. Movement along the shady porticoes in this area, for both the visitors and household members, included a visually pleasing vista of the central décor and the surrounding painted surfaces.

A courtyard which is foremost utilitarian for practical purposes in domestic architecture in general, such as providing privacy, circulation, light, air and an open area suitable to be used for various domestic tasks assumed a further meaning in the ancient Roman domestic context. As an 'everyday space' the courtyard in the ancient Roman context, besides fulfilling the practical needs served to visually please those using these spaces either to access the different parts of the house or else spending time in them. To create this visual pleasure the ancient Romans made use of light, water, color, sculpture, greenery and column in various combinations. These are used to create a particular spatial and visual focus that acted as a backdrop for the receptions and domestic activities and enhanced the spatial experience, for both the visitors and residents. Depending on its location, requirements of privacy, the type of domestic tasks, rituals, events and associated rooms, the courtyard was arranged either as a decorated formal area, or else, as in the case of the colonnaded garden, as an exhibition space for visual and bodily consumption from many angles and modes.

\* I thank to Pelin Yoncaci for preparing the drawings in Figures 1 and 2.

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## (ENDNOTES)

- <sup>1</sup> On the architecture and decoration of Roman house: Wallace-Hadrill (1994); Gazda (1991); Clarke (1991); Laurence (1994); Laurence and Wallace-Hadrill (1997); Bon and Jones (1997).
- <sup>2</sup> This paper presents some initial views and observations on this topic. A comprehensive and more thorough discussion of this topic needs further elaboration supported with theoretical background and case studies in a longer format.
- <sup>3</sup> Wallace-Hadrill (1996); Riggsby (1998).
- <sup>4</sup> George (1998) 85-93 for statuary (portraits, portrait-herms, statues) and fountains found in the atria. For a detailed study of the fountains found in a Pompeian house, see Andersson (1990). In few houses atria were converted also into planted areas, George (1989) 93-94. For columns in atria, see George (1989) 94-96.
- <sup>5</sup> Morning greeting (*salutation*) and patronage in ancient authors: Mart. *Ep.* 5.22, 6.88, 4.8.1-6; Sen., *De Brevitate Vitae* 14.4; Sen., *Ben.* 6.34.5; Tac., *Dial.* 6; in modern authors: Saller (1982) 128-129 with the footnotes; Wallace-Hadrill (1989) 63-87; Flower (1996) 217-220.
- <sup>6</sup> For the rituals associated to the domestic divinities, birth, coming-of-age, marriage and funeral, see Harmon (1978) 1592-1603; Dixon (1992) 64-65, 133-59; Flower (1996) 200-202, also the footnotes for ancient references; Clarke (1991) 10-12; Scullard (1981) 18; Ogilvie (1969) 102-104.
- <sup>7</sup> The colonnaded courtyard was derived from the Greek courtyard house; the more lavish and grand examples from Greek public architecture, Wallace-Hadrill (1994) 20-21. It was first introduced in the late Hellenistic period, and became a recurring element in atrium houses in the 1<sup>st</sup> c. AD, George (1998) 84. Also see Dickmann (1996) for the introduction and development of colonnaded courtyard in Hellenistic Pompeii.
- <sup>8</sup> See Jashemski (1979) 89- 140 for the life in the colonnaded courtyard.
- <sup>9</sup> The most detailed study on Roman private gardens is Jashemski (1979). Also see Zanker (1998) 156-189 for differently arranged examples of courtyards and gardens in Pompeian houses.
- <sup>10</sup> Vitruvius 7.5.2. mentions that long promenades were painted with natural scenes in earlier times, an application adopted to domestic courtyard ambulatories in later periods as well. Jashemski (1979) 55-73 for paintings found in gardens.
- <sup>11</sup> Dwyer (1982) 118-119, 129-134.
- <sup>12</sup> Jashemski (1979) 34-54 and Zanker (1998) 168-174 for the items that embellished the private gardens at Pompeii and Herculaneum.
- <sup>13</sup> Dwyer (1982) 116.
- <sup>14</sup> For an inventory of contents of some domestic gardens in Pompeii see Dwyer (1982) 38-48, 71-78, 88-98.
- <sup>15</sup> See Dwyer (1982) 123-128, for a short overview of sculptural compositions found in a group of Pompeian houses.
- <sup>16</sup> Lawson (1950) 102.
- <sup>17</sup> See Bek (1980) 164-203.

## HISTOIRE-MÉMOIRE-IMAGINATION

Panayiotis PAGALOS

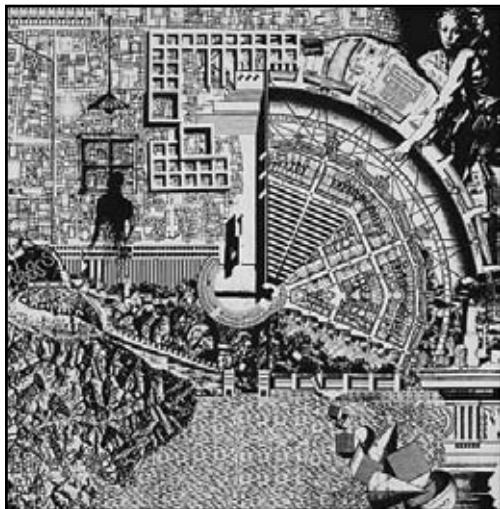
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»Imagination et mémoire sont deux noms de la même chose, nommée différemment pour diverses raisons«

Thomas Hobbes

**I**l n'y a pas d'histoire sans intention, pas de référence au passé qui ne pourra affleurer une action dans le présent. Selon le mot célèbre de Nietzsche, dans toutes les époques la connaissance du passé était désirable si, et seulement si, « elle servait l'avenir et le présent ». Ainsi la réalité vécue devient histoire, elles se fragmente en plusieurs versions, histoires et mémoires imaginaires.

**D**ans *La société du spectacle* Debord qualifie la réflexion sur l'histoire comme « réflexion par rapport au pouvoir ». Et en effet l'histoire devient un outil efficace aux mains de tout pouvoir qui par la transmission « construite » et l'éducation élargit sa souveraineté. Toute trace matériel serviable de ce but, tout fragment d'une histoire « construite » participe aux en-jeux de la « mémoire collective imposée » : bâtiments, vestiges, textes, œuvres d'art sont perpétuellement choisis comme « preuves » de cette histoire.



**M**ais si l'histoire est construction quelle sera sa différence par rapport au mythe ?

Seulement l'imagination peut lutter contre un mythe construit qui, par le biais de la répétition est devenu une mémoire collective, seulement un mythe nouveau peut résister au mythe déjà établi. Puisque, la plus profonde contribution du mythe se trouve dans la libération de la pensée vis-à-vis de la réalité, chose que Platon n'ignorait pas : dans les œuvres platoniciennes l'« imagination » est, en tant que pensée philosophique, la voie de contourner la réalité mensongère des choses sensibles et des opinions intéressées, tout le *miroitement* du sensible, pour approcher à la « vérité ». Son élève Aristote reprend, d'ailleurs, dans sa *Poétique*, ce fil de pensée: ce qui caractérise le bon poète ce n'est pas de nous réciter ce qui est arrivé mais ce qui *pourrait* arriver selon l'ordre du « possible et du vraisemblable ». La philosophie platonique est, dans ce sens, une *poétique du mythe*.



**E**xactement comme Platon parle de la réalité à partir de son modèle idéal qui se reflète dans le réel, le peintre et graveur italien Giovanni Antonio Canal, connu comme Canaletto<sup>1</sup>, représente une Venise idéale, cité céleste. Sa grandeur, sa vertu et son régime doivent être représentés par son architecture. Dans sa peinture, *Capriccio con edifici palladiani* (1759), apparaissent, au cœur même de la Venise, trois bâtiments de Palladio (deux déjà faits à Vicenza est un projet pour le pont de Rialto). Cette « altération » de la mémoire manifeste le désir pour une autre réalité : Canaletto nous voyage dans un lieu et un temps que

<sup>1</sup> Venise, 1697-1768.

chacun peut comprendre mais qui reste imaginaire. Aldo Rossi, qui connaît profondément l'histoire politique de la Venise et le rôle de l'architecture paladienne, trouve dans ce mythe de Canaletto deux éléments fondamentales: (a) la méthode rationnelle à travers laquelle il trompe notre mémoire et (b) la signification politique de cette méthode. La formule de la Renaissance pour la recherche d'une « autre vérité » assumée par Palladio, consistait une grande menace pour les hommes forts de l'Etat de venisiens. C'est pour cela que les portes de la Venise resteront fermées pour toujours au discours architectural paladin.

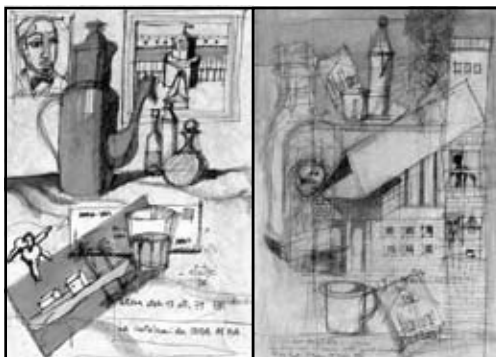
Rossi examine attentivement l'action de Canaletto, analyse les structures idéologiques de ce mythe, comprend la force active de l'imagination. Au rétablissement du théâtre Fenice<sup>2</sup>, il choisit de mettre dans l'intérieur de la nouvelle salle l'aspect de la basilique de Palladio à Vicenza, en réduction, Rossi, exactement comme Canaletto dans son *Capriccio*, introduit Palladio dans le « lieu-interdit », à l'intérieur de la Venise, en lui conférant la place qui lui vaut à travers une reconstitution de l'architecture qui est une relecture de l'histoire. La proposition de Rossi à Venise montre que l'histoire n'est pas pour lui un passé revu, mais un domaine ouvert aux interventions et renversements diachroniques. Son vocabulaire architecturale épouse les mouvements de la pensée analogique qui essaie, en mobilisant l'imagination, de trouver quelques réponses relevant des fragments d'hier.



L'ouvrage-symbole de la pensée analogique est son œuvre *La città analoga*, un collage de mémoire et d'imagination présente par Rossi et ses amis<sup>3</sup> à la Biennale de Venise en 1976 et accompagné d'un texte au même titre a été publié par la revue italienne *Lotus*<sup>4</sup> en décembre de la même année. Le lecteur de ce texte verra comment, pour Rossi, l'imagination a le pouvoir de reconstituer la mémoire : une ville vivante et humaine se nourrit continuellement de l'imagination.

L'ennemi de celui-ci n'est autre que l'idéologie qui soumet l'architecture aux exigences de la reproduction du pouvoir politique.

Différentes combinaisons analogiques d'objets imaginaires et réels, apparaissent aussi dans nombreux projets de Rossi : des monuments, textes, morceaux autobiographiques de mémoire, voyages, symboles, images par la vie de gens et des animaux, objets hors échelle, fragments diachroniques d'un théâtre architecturale en mouvement, incessamment



renouvelé. Les projets de Rossi ressemblent aux *rebus*, ces jeux énigmatiques où la proposition recherchée est indiquée par différentes figures, lettres et notes. Pour arriver à deviner il faut imaginer, rapporter, re-articuler ces correspondances partielles, c'est-à-dire composer les fragments dans un ensemble sensé, « construire » une histoire, son histoire, son mythe. C'est pour cela qu'il est impossible pour des projets comme la *città analoga* d'être interprétés seulement selon le mode analytique: l' quintessence de l'analogie se love dans le jeu des correspondances temporelles produites à tout moment par les fragments représentés. J'ajouterais simplement que la *città analoga* est un ensemble d'« interaction » et en même temps un surcroît d'information, c'est-à-dire exactement ce qui, selon les recherches récentes d'Umberto Eco, constitue un *ars oblivionalis*, l'art d'oublier<sup>5</sup>. La pensée analogique, très poétique en cela, est en effet, un outil d'oubli, une façon d'oublier l'aujourd'hui pesant et de voyager, par l'imagination et les fragments, dans le temps.

Les mythes de Platon, les mythes de Canaletto et de Rossi, mettent la réalité en situation d'oubli en vue de remplacer le réel par l'imaginaire. Le mythe est une description historique, et en tant que telle, il a le pouvoir d'exclure de la mémoire tout ce qui ne revient pas de cette description même, comme un livre captivant qui nous entraîne en tourbillon vers lui-même. Quand je cite, je me souviens de ce qui m'empêche à se souvenir dans le présent. Quand j'imagine je libère ma mémoire des idoles présents et je recommence à me souvenir ce qui dans le monde des sensibles est occultée: les « idées », dirait un Platon. L'imagination comme « oubli du réel » ou « mémoire de l'idéal ». Cet idéal est pourtant constitué de tout aspect humaine de la réalité : fragments de vie, de pensée et de civilisation que l'Histoire officielle à très souvent offusqué, dans son passage triomphale. Nous avons besoins de nos mythes disséminés dans le passé et reconstitués par l'imaginaire, mais porteurs de tout l'humain de l'humanité, afin de résister au grand Mythe de l'Histoire homogène, Moloch réel qui écrase tout ce qui ne se transforme selon ses vœux.

Quand nous imaginons nous oublions, nous nous libérons de l'emprise du temps construit, nous faisons<sup>6</sup> à nouveau notre histoire en reconstituant incessamment passé, présent et avenir.

\* Work supported by the Carathodory Programme of the University of Patras

<sup>2</sup> Projet qui était réalisé après la mort de Rossi.

<sup>3</sup> En collaboration avec Eraldo Consolascio, Bruno Reichlin kaj Fabio Reinhart.

<sup>4</sup> Lotus International, n.13, Dicembre 1976, p. 4-13

<sup>5</sup> Eco, Umberto, voir la conférence *Come perdere la memoria*, Istituto Italiano di Scienze Umane, Firenze, Palazzo Strozzi, 19/05/2006. Toute la conférence a été publiée dans *La Repubblica*, 20/05/2006, p. 42.

<sup>6</sup> En grec ancien *poioime*, qui est le verbe du nom *poiesis*, *poésie*.

## THREE PAIRS OF SHOES

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### Introduction

Art as an experience is immediate. It cannot be replaced, or substituted, by anything else than the immediate experience. Yet, reproduction of the artwork has brought art into our houses. And although it cannot replace the actual action of experiencing art, it can actually bring the work closer to us; it can make the artwork familiar. As Walter Benjamin writes in *The Work of Art in the Epoch of its Technical Reproducibility*:

*"The work of art has fundamentally always been reproducible. What human beings have made, could always be copied by human beings. Such coping was practiced by students as art exercise, by masters to disseminate works and finally from profit-minded third parties"*<sup>1</sup>

Consequently, this is the way that a student in the School of Fine Arts becomes familiar with most artists work: through reproductions, books and nowadays through video documentation. With the exception of visits to local galleries and museums, and few trips to some major museums, the average student, will use reproduction as a means of study. And although *"something is missing in even the most perfect reproductions: the here-and-now of the work of art-its unique existence at the place where it is located"*<sup>2</sup>, there are some artworks, so vivid, (even in a reproduction), that a mere photo, or a description can provide the viewer with an idea of what the work is about, it can inspire him/her and make them think, dream, imagine. This is partly due to the fact that

*"... technical reproduction proves to be more independent in regards to the original than the manual kind. In photography, for example, it can highlight aspects of the original inaccessible to the human eye by means of lenses and shot angles of its own choosing, or capture images with the help of certain procedures, such as the zoom or the slow motion, which utterly elude natural vision"*<sup>3</sup>

And

*"... it can furthermore bring the copy of the original into situations, which are not accessible to the original. Above all it makes it possible for the original to come closer to the consumer..."*<sup>4</sup>

Such work is Marina Abramović's *Shoes for Departure* presented in a reference book titled *Public Body, Installation and Objects 1965–2001*. It is an installation piece, showing 6 pairs of shoes, carved on amethyst stone.



The photos present *Shoes* in various installations around the world and throughout the years. The impression given by the photographic reproduction of this work is very strong. It is almost inevitable but to connect it with Heidegger's *The Origin of the Work of Art* [*Der Ursprung des Kunstwerkes*] and in particular the part that described Van Gogh's *Shoes*. Also the rough way that these shoes were carved on amethyst recalled images of harsh crude objects, presented in fairy tales, as instruments of pain and punishment. The icon of the shoes / stone or iron shoes is very often encountered in bedtime stories. Usually these shoes were worn by the evil woman as punishment, or by the kind and beautiful young girl, as a period of trial – the transcendence from adolescence to maturity. The example we shall examine here will be the story of Snow-white written by the Grimm brothers. At the end of the story, Snow-white's evil stepmother is punished to wear a pair of burning hot iron shoes and dance in them until she drops dead.

<sup>1</sup> *The Work of Art in the Epoch of its Technical Reproducibility* [Reproduzierbarkeit], by Walter Benjamin 1938, translation by Dennis Redmond, 2006, page 2 <http://www.enf.org/~dredmond/ReproducibilityTrans.html>

<sup>2</sup> Ibid, page 2

<sup>3</sup> Ibid, page 2-3

<sup>4</sup> Ibid, page 3



## The embodiment of earth / The establishment of space

The *Origin of the Work of Art* is a fascinating philosophical approach. In this study Heidegger address the *thingly character*<sup>5</sup> of all artworks. He writes:

*"There is something stony in a work of architecture, wooden in a carving, colored in a painting, spoken in a linguistic work, sonorous in a musical composition. The thingly element is so obstinately present in the art-work that we are compelled rather to say conversely that the architectural work is in stone, the carving is in wood, the painting in color, the linguistic work in speech, the musical composition in sound."*<sup>6</sup>

But the artwork reveals something more than its thingly character. "In the work of art something other is brought together with the thing that is made"<sup>7</sup> When we encounter an artwork we encounter "the sense of presence"<sup>8</sup>. The artwork as a thing, "is perceptible by sensations in the senses belonging to sensibility",<sup>9</sup> and indeed bares a thingly character. Moreover, it can also present an "equipmental / workly character",<sup>10</sup> but these are not its main features. So, what exactly the work of art reveals to the viewer?

To answer this, Heidegger uses as an example a painting by Vincent van Gogh titled *The Shoes*. He notes that "the equipmental being of equipment consists in its serviceability".<sup>11</sup> In the case of the real peasant shoes their serviceability can be found in their use. It's only "a pair of peasant shoes and nothing more".<sup>12</sup> But what happens in the case of the artwork?

Heidegger sets the concept of truth that is embodied in the work of art. This, is not related with mimesis or with representation, but rather is connected with the basic essence of things. As he quotes:

*"In the work, therefore, it is not a matter of the reproduction of a single entity present-at-hand at any given time, but rather of the reproduction of the universal essence of things."*<sup>13</sup>

The idea of truth that is embodied within the artwork, and the concept of appearance of the basic essence of things, in art, is essential to our approach. More over in his book *Die Kunst und der Raum; L' Art et l' espace*, (St. Gallen: Erker-Verlag, 1969-1983), he introduces the concept of *Räumen* [make-room-for].<sup>14</sup>

Heidegger uses the language as a means of approach to the concept of space as space. It is an old method that belongs to the ontological tradition, initially used by Plato and Aristotle.<sup>15</sup> He projects the concept of [embodiment of place]<sup>16</sup> in sculpture. Sculpture is the embodiment of truth within the artwork, and also the [embodiment of truth as a means of establishing places].<sup>17</sup>

To support the concept of *Räumen* [make-room-for], Heidegger introduces the word *einräumen* [(1) grant] and attributes to this word two different meanings. He explains *einräumen* [(1) grant] as [arrange] and also as [allow]. He claims that through this double concession takes place the establishment of place.<sup>18</sup>

## The embodiment of departure

Abramović's work can be viewed under this context. *Shoes for Departure* is a work that presents a distinctive sculptural aspect, and therefore the concept of *einräumen* can apply very well in this case. In the book *Public Body, Installations and objects 1965-2001*, interviewed by Germano Celant, she describes, the frame within which she creates (not only performance work but sculpture as well):

*"So I'm always coming up against construction restrictions, but in the end, for me, the utility of the object is the most important"*<sup>19</sup>

The question of utility in Marina Abramović's work brings us back to the utility of the artwork, as Heidegger describes it. It is through the use of the object that one can realize - understand its utility. It is a question of definition of Being of the object. Being is enlightened, by serviceability / by the use of. In the case of Van Gogh *Shoes*, Heidegger reveals the world that is under the painting. As instruments / objects these shoes are connected with their actual utility/serviceability. These instruments are made not only to help us walk, but also to assist us in our "world of daily labor".<sup>20</sup>

This serviceability is claimed in the work *Shoes for Departure*. Using Abramović's words:

*"Let's call them transitory objects rather than sculptures. They are not separate from life; you can enter them. They are small settings that have to be used..."*<sup>21</sup>

Marina Abramović, insists that spectators should use the sculptures she makes. She produces her objects in series, so that a great number of people can use them. She rejects the idea of making one - unique piece, and accompanies her work with fundamental - almost basic instructions for use. Be-

<sup>5</sup> PHILOSOPHIES OF ART AND BEAUTY, *Selected Readings in Aesthetics from Plato to Heidegger*, edited by Albert HOFSTADTER and Richard KUHN, *The Origin of the Work of Art*, Martin HEIDEGGER, page 651, Modern Library Edition, September 1964, NY, USA

<sup>6</sup> Ibid, page 651

<sup>7</sup> Ibid, page 652

<sup>8</sup> Ibid, page 654

<sup>9</sup> Ibid, page 656

<sup>10</sup> Ibid, page 661

<sup>11</sup> Ibid, page 662

<sup>12</sup> Ibid, page 663

<sup>13</sup> Ibid, page 665

<sup>14</sup> Ο Χώρος και η Τέχνη, Martin [Art Space] HEIDEGGER, translation, introductory notes and comments Yiannis Tzavaras, editions INAIKTOΣ, Athens, Greece, 2006, page 39

<sup>15</sup> Ibid, page 39, note 9

<sup>16</sup> Ibid, page 48

<sup>17</sup> Ibid, page 52

<sup>18</sup> Ibid, page 41-42

<sup>19</sup> Marina Abramović *Public Body*, Germano CELANT, editions CHARTA, Milano, Italy 2001, page 10

<sup>20</sup> Η Προέλευση του Έργου Τέχνης, [The Origin of the Work of Art] Martin HEIDEGGER, translation, introductory notes and comments Yiannis Tzavaras, editions ΔΙΟΔΩΝΗ [DODONI], Athens, Greece, 1986, page 55, note 61

<sup>21</sup> Marina Abramović *Public Body*, Germano CELANT, editions CHARTA, Milano, Italy 2001, page 11



ing very specific on the way that she expects viewers to use the work, the instructions she gives, are usually connected with "basic body positions".<sup>22</sup>

In the work we examine here the instructions were the following:

*"Enter the shoes with bare feet  
Eyes closed  
Motionless  
Depart"*<sup>23</sup>

His work embodies the very idea of space – departure – movement and constant change among its users. Although heavy to lift or to move, these shoes *make room* for the concept of departure. The *establishment of space* takes place in this work in a dual way. It is the space of the art work as it is described in Heidegger's *L'Art et l'espace*, and also is the metaphor of departure, the metaphor of the place of destiny. This new world, that is revealed, consists of movement. The constant change among the ones that 'use' this art piece, transform its rigid and heavy physical form into something light, that can almost lift the viewer into another destination. It is a striking image of contradiction, among the rigid and motionless shoes, and the constant change and movement of the users.

Without moving the viewer can experience/imagine movement. With eyes closed and bare feet, one departs of a 'new place', where 'new destiny' is established. These shoes, stand there, heavy and roughly carved on amethyst, mere holes on stone, expect the new 'user' to take them into a new mental space. By wearing these shoes, each viewer *establishes* each time a new space and a new destination. Their utility can be found in the metaphor of departure to the place of destiny that is embodied into them.

*"... Of all my objects, the ones that have had the best reception are the Shoes for Departure, 1991. They are impossible shoes, because they weigh 65 kilos (143lbs) and nobody can move them, but nevertheless they are described as being "for departure". They suggest a kind of mental journey rather than a physical one ..."*<sup>24</sup>

Heidegger approaches art as a philosopher, and uses the apparent object (artwork) in order to establish a new world. Abramović approaches art as an artist. She creates artwork with the same goal: to establish a new world. In both cases the apparent object has a double use. It exists there, in real time and real space, evidence of the artist's craftsmanship and genius, but also the artwork slips gently to another world. It can be the world of truth that Heidegger points, or a mental world that Abramović suggests, or the world of imagination the domain of the fairy tales.

### **The embodiment of transcendence (from old to new) / the embodiment of contradiction (among good and evil)**

There is nothing more connected to imagination than fairy tales and myths. Fairy tales are by definition fictions,

products of imagination. The world that one perceives from fairy tales, may bare some resemblance to reality, but it is a completely different world both in terms of time and space.

In his book *The Fantastic. A Phenomenological Psychology of Fantasy*, Jean-Paul Sartre describes the imaginary world:

*D'une façon générale ce n'est pas seulement la matière même de l'objet qui est irréelle : toutes les déterminations d'espace et de temps auxquelles il est soumis participent de cette irréalité*<sup>25</sup>

*[Generally speaking it is not only the matter of the object that is not real: all definitions of space and time that are attributed to the imaginary are not real]*

Furthermore

*"Ce n'est pas que toute détermination d'espace fasse défaut ... Mais les déterminations topographiques sont incomplètes ou manquent totalement"*<sup>26</sup>  
*[It is not because (the imaginary world) lacks definition of space ... but it is because spatial definitions are incomplete or sometimes completely absent]*

Sartre defines the imaginary space as [a space without parts]. He writes:

*"L'espace de l'objet irréel est sans parties. Mais, dira-t-on, ne faut-il pas dire que pour tout objet irréel la formule de Berkeley « esse est percipi » est vraie sans réserves, et, dans ce cas, ne doit-on pas remarquer que la conscience ne confère pas expressément à l'objet irréel cet espace sans parties ? A vrai dire, de l'espace irréel la conscience n'affirme rien expressément : c'est l'objet qu'elle vise se présente comme une totalité concrète qui enveloppe, entre autres qualités, l'extension. L'espace de l'objet, comme sa couleur ou sa forme, est donc irréel"*<sup>27</sup>

Similar to the spatial definition of the imaginary, Sartre defines the imaginary time as non-real too:

*"Ainsi le temps des objets irréels et lui-même irréel"*<sup>28</sup>

*"On admettra peut être plus difficilement que le temps de l'objet en image est un irréel ... L'objet de la conscience diffère en nature de la conscience dont il est le corrélatif. Il n'est donc nullement prouvé que le temps d'écoulement de la conscience d'image soit le même que le temps de l'objet image"*<sup>29</sup>

*"A la limite, le temps d'une scène irréelle doublant exactement une scène réelle qui se déroule présentement restera un temps irréel ... le présent irréel et le présent réel ne coïncident pas ... Entre ces deux présents il n'y a*

<sup>25</sup> *L'imaginaire. Psychologie, phénoménologie de l'imagination*, Jean Paul SARTRE, Librairie Gallimard 26<sup>e</sup> édition, Paris nrf 1948, France, page 163

<sup>26</sup> *ibid*, page 164

<sup>27</sup> *Ibid*, page 166

<sup>28</sup> *Ibid*, page 170

<sup>29</sup> *Ibid*, page 167

<sup>22</sup> *Ibid*, page 10

<sup>23</sup> *Ibid*, page 162

<sup>24</sup> *Ibid*, page 21

*pas simultanité. L'appréhension de l'un coïncide avec l'anéantissement de l'autre.*<sup>30</sup>

*[At the end, the time that takes place an imaginary event – replacing in every detail a real event that is actually happening – will remain an un-real time ... the two presents, the un-real and the real present, do not agree ... Between these two presents time is not equal. Perception of the one results the end of the other]*

In fairy tales the heroes can look like you and me, spaces and buildings can appear like the ones we know, but there is always a door open to those creatures that don't look like anything we know – to those places that nobody has ever seen – to those buildings created in a magic way, in the middle of nowhere. Literature, and especially fairy tales and myths, present the truth that is embodied in the story, the *appearance of the basic essence of things*. In fiction exists the concept of *Räumen* [*make-room-for as allow to exist*]. Fairy tales [*allow*] imaginative worlds [*to exist*]. Also, when entering the imaginary world of the story, a different space and a different time take place. During *in* the story the real world ceases to exist.

In the story of Snow white the iron shoes appear at the very end. These shoes are not the basic element of the story. Yet their use at the end of narration makes them a powerful image. In Bruno Bettelheim's *The Uses of Enchantment*, there is a detailed analysis, of the fairy-tale. Bettelheim argues that the death of the evil queen symbolizes the end of all inner passions contradictions and self-destructive aspects of one's personality. Only after the evil-self is destroyed, one can be free and happy.<sup>31</sup> The very notion of the evil queen *makes room* for the existence of Snow-white. There is a connection between the two that lies exactly on this contradiction. Snow-white exists as the antithesis of her stepmother; the latter could not appear without the former. The evil stepmother as a model in children's imagination *makes room* for the "inadequate mother". The mother appears "inadequate", even "evil", when she denies fulfilling the child's needs. Imagination and reality blend into each other, and growing up is connected with realizing the borders among them. Allowing the existence of the "evil stepmother" into imagination, the child *makes room* for the contradiction to exist in the real world. Creating the "evil stepmother" allows the child to destroy her finally.<sup>32</sup> For psychoanalysis shoes represent female sexuality.<sup>33</sup> The death of the evil queen *makes room* for Snow-white to live<sup>34</sup>. It cannot be any other way. It is the old way of life that needs to be destroyed, so that the new life can take place. The old ways disappear and *make room* for the new to come.

## Conclusion

The artwork as it is presented by Heidegger aims to reveal the basic essence of things to embody truth and to establish

space. It is a transformation that occurs to the object through the process that is called art. Art as action brings these features to the object that otherwise would be the ordinary thing, and therefore an empty shell of mere craftsmanship. In the case of fairy tales, these carry in them the images of the subconscious. These images are the vast and general icons, of what is recognized by all as *good – evil – beautiful – ugly* etc. The world of the fairytales also reveals the basic essence of things, and reveals truth in its outmost shape. Fairy tales are about the general truths of civilization, the general images of good and evil, the general distinctions of mankind. Using once more Heidegger's quotation that we used previously:

*"In the work, therefore, it is not a matter of the reproduction of a single entity present-at-hand at any given time, but rather of the reproduction of the universal essence of things."*<sup>35</sup>

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- \* *Η γοητεία των παραμυθιών. Μια ψυχαναλυτική προσέγγιση* [The Uses of Enchantment] Bruno Bettelheim, translation Eleni Asteriou, editions Γλάρος, Athens, Greece, 1995
- \* *The Annotated Snow White and the Seven Dwarfs Part of the SurLaLune Fairy Tale Pages* by Heidi Anne Heiner, <http://www.surlalunefairytales.com/sevendwarfs/notes.html>
- \* *L'imaginaire. Psychologie, phénoménologique de l'imagination*, Jean Paul SARTRE, Librairie Gallimard 26<sup>e</sup> édition, Paris **nrf** 1948, France

<sup>30</sup> Ibid, page 169

<sup>31</sup> *Η γοητεία των παραμυθιών. Μια ψυχαναλυτική προσέγγιση* [The Uses of Enchantment] Bruno Bettelheim, translation Eleni Asteriou, editions Γλάρος, Athens, Greece, 1995, page 300

<sup>32</sup> 18 *ibid*, page 99

<sup>33</sup> *The Annotated Snow White and the Seven Dwarfs Part of the SurLaLune Fairy Tale Pages* by Heidi Anne Heiner, annotation 30 <http://www.surlalunefairytales.com/sevendwarfs/notes.html>

<sup>34</sup> *Ibid*, annotation 32

<sup>35</sup> *PHILOSOPHIES OF ART AND BEAUTY, Selected Readings in Aesthetics from Plato to Heidegger*, edited by Albert HOFSTADTER and Richard KUHN'S *The Origin of the Work of Art*, Martin HEIDEGGER, page 665, Modern Library Edition, September 1964, NY, USA

## ÉROTIQUE ET POÏÉTIQUE

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L' erotique est l'étude et la philosophie des conduites amoureuses. La poïétique est l'étude et la philosophie des conduites créatrices.

Quels sont les rapports entre ces deux approches du comportement humain ? Opposition ? Rivalité ? Collusion par multiplication logique des deux extensions ? La présente note, vu sa brièveté, n'évoquera que quelques points, tributaires d'un clivage théorique général entre nature et culture.

Notons d'abord que ces deux disciplines, à la fois empiriques et conceptuelles, comportent des secteurs internes qu'on ne saurait confondre.

**I. L'érotique** englobe, au bas mot, les sciences physiologiques et médicales de la procréation, avec une copieuse spécialité de pathologie érotologique, l'examen des facteurs sexuels de la formation de la personnalité, donc une grande partie de la psychanalyse, l'énumération des affects spécifiques de la rencontre amoureuse chez la femme et chez l'homme, la psychologie des conduites d'affrontement ou de connivence entre les sexes, la distinction des niveaux de plaisirs éprouvés lors des conduites sexuelles, érotiques et amoureuses, notamment l'examen des spécificités de la jouissance où *édoné* ne saurait se confondre avec *aisthèsis* (donc l'hédonisme avec l'esthétique), le tout couronné par une philosophie du bonheur intégrant les arts du plaisir et le sensualisme à un eudémonisme où l'orgasme voisinerait avec l'extase et l'illumination, dans l'expérience, souvent mystique, de la perte de soi.

Bref, le *Kama sutra*, le *Cantique des cantiques*, Sade, Laclos, Krafft-Ebing, Freud, Pascal Pia. Pauline Réage, Catherine Millet, Thérèse d'Avila et Platon risquent de se disputer cet univers, arbitré finalement par ceux que Bachelard rangeait dans la mouvance du pansexualisme.

**II. La poïétique**, de son côté, subsume toutes les spécialités pratiques et théoriques, opératoires,

pédagogiques, politiques et éthiques, par lesquelles l'homme se fait constructeur, depuis le modeste bricolage d'une chose jusqu'aux constructions philosophiques et mathématiques les plus abstraites. A l'*éros*, elle oppose le *poiein*. Au ressentir, elle oppose le faire. Pour elle, l'homme, fût-il un être jouisseur, ou raisonnable, ou adorateur, ou joueur, etc., est surtout un être créateur d'œuvres. Et, bien sûr, il peut être créateur dans le domaine du sexe, comme il peut-être érotique dans le domaine de la création.

On le voit, notre problème est posé. Ses formes multiples semblent tourner autour du concept d'ART.

**III. L'Art.** La poïétique fait sienne la distinction clairement établie par Platon dans *Le Sophiste*<sup>1</sup> entre *ktétikè technè* et *poiètikè technè*, la première limitant l'art à l'exercice d'une coutume technique, dite parfois artisanale : le pêcheur à la ligne n'invente pas la canne à pêche chaque matin (c'est l'exemple que prend Platon), la seconde identifiant l'art aux opérations créatrices. La distinction entre *labor* et *opus* se retrouve ici.

Le faire, dans l'expression « faire l'amour », en appelle à la poïétique, mais la copulation laborieuse et routinière ramène l'art à son niveau animal, voire à son degré zéro, la nature n'en demandant pas plus... L'art devient plus clairement autonome et inventif quand la libido vise, à travers l'acte sexuel, le plaisir dominateur de la séduction, de l'initiation, ou les satisfactions cruelles de la *Schadenfreude*.

Fut un temps, le mot *art* a été nettement péjoratif. Dès le Xe siècle, dans la *Chanson de Roland*, les *males artz*, puis le *subtil art* au XVe siècle, aggravent le sens du latin *artificium*, et désigne parfois la sorcellerie. L'allusion au Séducteur persiste au XVIIIe siècle, chez l'abbé Prévost, par exemple, dans sa traduction de *Clarisse Harlowe*. Dans ce livre, Lovelace s'écrit : « Je viens d'entendre son récit. Ruse, imposture, misérable artifice, dans une fille du caractère de Clarisse. Mais ce sexe est l'art même. » Ou bien : « Ne me blâme de ma vie pour avoir employé un peu d'art avec cette adorable fille. »<sup>2</sup>

Nous sommes alors dans une zone libidinale intermédiaire entre le sexe et l'amour, celle où prend place la passion à la fois charnelle et morale de ce que Freud appelait les « éro-

tiques obsessionnels ». Dépasant parfois le rite vers la fête, ces obsédés de posséder et de jouir vivent une intensité dionysiaque analogue à celle de l'Amour fou, mais sans l'oblation qui couronne celui-ci d'une mystique de la personne aimée.

Laclos, dans *Les liaisons dangereuses* nous montre comment un libertin, féru de la « souveraineté » arrogante dont parlera Roger Vaillant, découvre malgré lui l'amour oblatif, devant le sacrifice éperdu de la Présidente de Tourvel, qu'il a réussi à briser. Ce roman capital nous fait passer du XVIIIe siècle libertin au Romantisme du XIXe siècle...

Un petit roman récent ajoute à cette structure du consentement infini, une note poétique plus explicite. *Les relations d'incertitude* d'Anne Walter<sup>1</sup> brode sur l'impossibilité de voir clair dans la nature réelle des rapports amoureux, surtout si ce n'est pas le Désir qui instaure les rites du sexe, mais les valeurs supérieures de l'activité créatrice d'un artiste, qui semble alimenter la sublimité de la jeune fille qu'il peint, par la prostitution de son modèle. Est-elle, par essence, la prostituée qu'il fait d'elle, ou la jeune fille qu'il exalte dans ses tableaux ? L'humiliation de celle-ci s'allie au pur amour, elle lit Fénelon : « On est dévoré de zèle, on s'effaie, on s'humilie, on craint le courroux du Maître, et son indifférence nous ferait mourir. »<sup>4</sup> Et ce pur amour la livre à des brutes, elle n'ose refuser. Elle trouve dans sa soumission une sorte de sainteté amoureuse. « Asservie, humiliée, mal-traitée... sans doute, mais aussi chavirée », elle aspire à la perte de soi.

Anne Walter, comme Pauline Réage dans *Histoire d'O*, construit son roman sur le modèle structural du sacrifice, qui, selon Marcel Mauss « est comme animé d'un pouvoir immanent, d'une sorte de vertu spirituelle. »<sup>5</sup> Ici, la jeune femme, immobilisée par la pose, représente la victime, les clients sont les prêtres qui officient, et le peintre, ordonnateur de la cérémonie, est le dieu, qui a besoin, pour exister pleinement, du *mana* de la victime.

Plus subtil encore est la sacrifice de amour dans *Histoire d'O*, car c'est moins O qui est anéantie, dans ces rituels sadomaso, que l'amour lui-même. L'amant d'O la plie à l'adultère en la soumettant aux caprices d'un « maître », Sir Stephen, en sorte que, finalement, la transfert de l'amour vers ce libertin triomphant fait de lui un dieu cruel, adoré sans espoir.

Bref, l'être humain en reste rarement à la simple nature du sexe. L'invention de la *Fin Amor*, que Denis de Rougemont<sup>6</sup> place dans le roman issu du mythe de *Tristan et Iseut*, si elle n'a pas dépassé les rapports de vassal à suzerain, a ouvert à la liberté de la personne le droit de refuser la loi du clan et l'autorité du Père. Cette liberté aura encore beaucoup de progrès à faire pour parvenir à l'égalité de l'homme et de la femme, dans le respect absolu de l'intégrité corporelle.

## IV. Le sexe sans l'amour.

Une coquetterie anti-humaniste (liée sans doute à la « mort de l'homme ») peut vouloir fuir les hautes sphères de l'éthique civilisée, et retrouver la sauvagerie naturelle du corps, libéré de tout carcan moral.

Car le sexe, anar enraciné dans les profondeurs de la nature, peut bien se passer de l'amour. Il fonctionne. C'est une « machine célibataire », comme le foie, la rate ou le poulmon. Pire : ne s'occupant que du *germen*, géré pour son plaisir, il se

moque bien de l'économie générale du corps, et plus encore de la dignité de la personne, dont il ignore tout.

Mme Catherine Millet, dans *La vie sexuelle de Catherine M*<sup>7</sup> a fort bien décrit cette sorte de purification libertine, censément déagée (comme l'Art brut) de toute acculturation, par un retour hédoniste à l'animalité. Elle ne parle pas de sa « vie amoureuse », ni de sa « vie érotique » (elle affirme qu'elle ne danse pas et refuse de séduire) ... C'est seulement l'histoire de ses organes génitaux, élargie aux émonctoires de son intestin.

Livre plaisant, mais sans mystère. Rien de violent. Pas d'onirisme. Rien de fou. Utopie zéro. Cath se porte bien. Elle ne subit pas, elle jouit. Elle ne refuse rien. Elle prend. Croit imiter les hommes ! Sa vie est-elle une œuvre ?

Elle n'instaure guère qu'un exemple à l'usage des femmes timides et coincées, qui, s'est-elle vantée, la félicitent. En fait, elle montre crûment que la femme naturelle, selon les affirmations insistantes de Sade, serait un être « vulgavague », dont le bonheur animal serait d'être livrée à tous. Je cite *La philosophie dans le boudoir* : « La destinée de la femme est d'être comme la chienne, comme la louve : elle doit appartenir à tous ceux qui veulent d'elle. »

Mais cette louve a écrit un livre. Elle n'a pas pu s'empêcher de créer. Certes, l'érotique d'un naturalisme anti-culturel est déjà un fait de culture.

Mais elle se prolonge ici en une poétique du roman, genre clé dans l'histoire de la notion de personne.<sup>8</sup>

La passion de créer dépasse alors celle de jouir ou de décrire l'inquiétante étrangeté de la jouissance des autres. Ceci, dans une ascèse, qui substitue ce que Bataille appelle une « dépense » mentale à la possible tribulation des viscères...

Valmont, dans *Les liaisons dangereuses*, a un sens aigu du haut-fait libertin, mais c'est le roman par lettres, écrit par Laclos, qui devient un chef-d'œuvre de la littérature universelle.

## V. L'amour sans le sexe.

A l'opposé de ce libertinage, ou par un libertinage d'un autre ordre, voici les adeptes californiens du *No sex*. Amants platoniques, ils s'abstiennent, non par respects des sermons du pape sur la chasteté comme seule défense contre le sida, ou par une réaction contre la pornographie particulièrement développée dans les pays puritains, mais, sans doute, par une mystique individualiste du couple rêvant d'un retour à l'Amour absolu, et libéré des pulsions naturelles, comme des trivialités de la société de consommation.<sup>9</sup> Culturalisme éthique qu'on pourrait croire porté à la limite du supportable, mais parfaitement supporté par les tenants de « l'identité A », qui se vantent d'être asexués...

Or, si l'on est satisfait de la vie, quelle qu'elle soit, pourquoi irait-on créer ? Le fondement de la poétique est dans l'invention d'un devant-être, par insatisfaction devant ce qui est. En outre, la dépense sexuelle et l'obsession du plaisir qui l'accompagne, retiennent souvent l'artiste dans la sensation, alors que l'activité créatrice gagne à la dépasser. Baudelaire le note crûment dans son *Journal intime*<sup>10</sup>, alors qu'il est loin d'être un A.

C'est sans doute « vie poétique » qui le porte à la fois au dégoût de la chair et à une sublimation créatrice. On ne s'étonnera pas qu'il ait titré *Le désir de peindre* sa description d'une femme merveilleuse, texte clé, dont je cite la fin : « Il y a

des femmes qui vous inspirent l'envie de les vaincre et de jouir d'elles, mais celle-ci donne le désir de mourir lentement sous son regard. »<sup>11</sup>

**VI. La création.** Il semble bien que la création artistique soit un dépassement de l'amour, comme amour est un dépassement du sexe. Dépassements dialectiques, qui intègrent ce qu'ils nient.

Pour le Surréalisme, sous l'influence de Freud, fuir le sexe, ou le nier, fera de la sublimation une sorte de tromperie.. André Breton oscille entre « l'in-fracassable noyau de nuit » du désir et *L'Amour fou*, comme invention magique marquée par le « signe ascendant » de la vie poétique. Pour lui, l'érotisme est « une cérémonie fastueuse dans un souterrain. » Et il écrit : « Amour, seul amour qui sois, amour charnel, j'adore, je n'ai jamais cessé d'adorer ton ombre vénéneuse, ton ombre mortelle. »<sup>12</sup> Comme lui, Dali fera un éloge appuyé des perversions, si elles intègrent la liberté de l'esprit à « l'érotique voilée » de « l'amour sublime ». Ce sont bien les « implications érotiques » dans les œuvres les plus hautes qui qualifient le Surréalisme comme mouvement poétique majeur du XXe siècle.

Et je ne saurais terminer cette brève mise au point sans citer le texte où Freud nous livre sa conception de l'artiste : « L'artiste, écrit-il,<sup>13</sup> est un introverti qui frise la névrose. Animé d'impulsions et de tendances extrêmement fortes, il voudrait conquérir bonheur, puissance, richesse et amour des femmes. Mais les moyens lui manquent pour se procurer ces satisfactions. » Il se tourne alors, poursuit Freud, vers la « vie imaginaire ».

Grâce à des « circonstances favorables », il échappe tout de même au refuge de la névrose, et « retrouve le chemin de la réalité ». Il donne à ses rêves éveillés une forme qui fait passer au niveau de l'universel ce qu'il ressent et ce qu'il dit, en sorte qu'autrui va se retrouver dans l'œuvre produite et se libérer, grâce à elle, de ce qui est refoulé en lui. A quoi s'ajoute, écrit Freud, (et c'est là, pour la poétique un point essentiel) que l'artiste possède « le pouvoir mystérieux de modeler des matériaux donnés jusqu'à en faire l'image fidèle de la représentation existant dans son imagination. » Le névrosé fuit dans le fictif, et se cache ainsi les malheurs dont il souffre subrepticement. L'artiste ne s'évade pas dans l'irréel, puisque c'est dans le réel qu'il instaure son œuvre. Et Freud de terminer astucieusement son analyse en retrouvant son point de départ : l'artiste, qui a tant apporté à autrui, reçoit en retour « honneur, puissance et amour des femmes. »

On saisira, non sans plaisir, ce que peut avoir d'ironique un tel texte, puisque dans sa description d'un processus poétique, Freud retrouve en fin de parcours, une valeur essentielle de l'érotique, valeur considérée ici comme la cause finale et l'aboutissement de la conduite créatrice, « l'amour des femmes ».

Ce réalisme, légèrement cynique, a fort déplu aux surréalistes, pour qui l'amour ne saurait être un « profit symbolique » dû au succès mondain de l'artiste. Le désir est l'essence de la poésie « faite par tous », seule voie de « la grande promesse, celle qui persiste après avoir été tenue »,

seule voie du dépassement de la « vie sordide » vers « l'amour admirable », seule voie d'accès au surréel comme transfiguration de l'être, enfin devenu « voyant ».

Si le Surréalisme doit se dépasser dans le Surrationalisme d'une synthèse ouverte, où les deux grands mythes de l'amour, celui de Tristan et Iseut et celui de Don Juan puissent cesser d'être contradictoires, c'est par la voie créatrice, qui permet à l'humain de se construire comme civilisation, à travers ses œuvres personnelles. Sortant de lui-même, l'*homo creator*, sort en même temps des fatalités qui liaient l'amour à la mort. Le mythe de l'œuvre jetée dans l'au-delà de la vie singulière, ouvrant sur l'universel, par dépassement du « moi haïssable », n'est pas une voie de la névrose, mais la VOIE d'une accession à la RAISON ARDENTE, comme valeur poétique, visée par une érotique du sublime.

#### (ENDNOTES)

<sup>1</sup> Platon, *Le Sophiste*, 219 d, repris en 255 a.

<sup>2</sup> Samuel Richardson, *Histoire de Clarisse Harlowe*, trad. de l'abbé Prévost (1751), Paris, Desjonquères, 1999, 2 vol. Cf. t.II, p. 179, 310, 351, etc.

<sup>3</sup> Arles, Actes sud, 1997.

<sup>4</sup> Fénelon, *Correspondance*, cité p. 62.

<sup>5</sup> Marcel Mauss, *Œuvres, t.I. Les fonctions sociales du sacré*, Paris, éd. de Minuit, 1968, p. 406.

<sup>6</sup> Denis de Rougemont, *L'Amour et l'Occident*, Paris, Plon, 1939.

<sup>7</sup> Paris, éd. du seuil, 2001.

<sup>8</sup> Cf. Ignace Meyerson, *Les fonctions psychologiques et les œuvres*, Paris, Vrin, 1948.

<sup>9</sup> Cf. *Le Monde* 2, n° 74, 1<sup>er</sup> au 22 juillet 2003, p.18 sq, et *Libération*, 6 août 2006, p.21.

<sup>10</sup> Mon cœur mis à nu, in *Journaux intimes de Baudelaire*, Paris, Nicéa, 1944, p. 74 : « Plus l'homme cultive les arts, moins il bande. »

<sup>11</sup> *Petits poèmes en prose*, Le spleen de Paris, XXXVI.

<sup>12</sup> *L'Amour fou*, p.108. O.C., Pléiade, t. II, p. 744.

<sup>13</sup> *Introduction à la psychanalyse*, Paris, Payot, 1921, p.403-404, repris en 1925 dans *Ma vie et le psychanalyse*, Paris, Gallimard, 1960, p. 80-81.

## THE MINIMUM TEXT OF THE PERFORMANCE AND THE INTERTEXTUAL BINDINGS

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A number of contemporary performances, as well as the theories that accompany them, demand the self-reference and self-existence that will allow them to be perceived by the public, without any reference not only to a previous text or to the "outside" world in general, but even to the past of the theatre itself. This way, each time that certain spectators watch performers, an act of communication takes place without, supposedly, contexts and environments, and the importance and the content of this communication are drawn from the act itself and its contributors, and are redefined at each meeting. Here, the principle of the singularity of the theatrical event is confirmed,<sup>1</sup> of the event that Artaud noted that "the theatre is the only place in the world where a gesture that has occurred cannot occur a second time";<sup>2</sup> of its non-reproducible substance,<sup>3</sup> but in a more inclusive way. Not only does the performer not know exactly who he is representing, but the postmodern performance itself is not differentiated from the other arts so much in its liveliness and directness, as in its persistence to fight against representation itself.<sup>4</sup> Given the fact that there is an absence of a text and its predetermined meanings, there is not even the slightest repetition which characterized a theatrical representation, since all of the elements of a performance are never stable, they appear and disappear with an uninterrupted transitivity, representing this way only the failure of the representation.<sup>5</sup>

It could be considered that the postmodern viewpoint is greatly influenced by two attitudes. The first has already been formulated by Antonin Artaud since 1938: "the poetic images in the theatre constitute a mental power which takes full flight within the area of the senses without needing reality in the least".<sup>6</sup> For this reason the theatre has the power to awaken "all the latent conflicts which live hidden deep inside of us" and through this awakening a symbol is born, the non-feasible, the impossible.<sup>7</sup> The second viewpoint was opposed by Jacques Derrida, regarding the binary structure of metaphysics of the West, according to which in the theatre a speech is developed which imitates nothing and is not supervised by anyone, it follows no one, because it is produced directly from the actor, whose gestures do not have a previous source of reference, while his movements create a figure, which does not foresee and is not accompanied by

any speech.<sup>8</sup> However, should imitation exist in the theatre, it does not imitate anything and it does not portray any archetype. The signs of the theatre do not have any referent object and for this reason they can not be included in a process which seeks the truth, but on the contrary they include the truth themselves.<sup>9</sup> In general, the truth of a performance is not found in the produced meanings, but in the process of its production. The postmodern theatre does precisely this: it focuses "on the very process of semiosis and not on its results".<sup>10</sup>

Fischer-Lichte recently supported that one of the main characteristics of theatrical performance is the fact that it does not convey given meanings, but it creates the meanings itself during the performance.<sup>11</sup> Such a position is already referenced in the work of Max Hermann, in which Fischer-Lichte finds the prelude for the epistemological shift towards the performative dimension of theatre,<sup>12</sup> noting that "the emergence of what happens is more important than what happens, and in any case more relevant than any meaning that may be attributed to it".<sup>13</sup> Many scholars have formulated similar views, such as Judith Butler regarding performances of daily life and specifically performances of the sexed body.<sup>14</sup> The sexed body is not a stable materiality, predetermined by a previous substance, but a constant and relentless materialization of possibilities, which are not external or preexisting, with regard to the act of materialization, but are born during the time of this materialization.<sup>15</sup> Although Butler supports that "gender is an act which has been rehearsed, much as a script survives the particular actors who make use of it, but which requires individual actors in order to be actualized and reproduced as reality once again,"<sup>16</sup> she wants to emphasize the presentness of every preventative action of every representative act. According to Chantal Pontbriand the postmodern performance «presents; it does not re-present»,<sup>17</sup> it does not have any referent besides itself,<sup>18</sup> it does not encode any kind of message, but it offers "a continuous movement, relocation or change of places".<sup>19</sup> Josette Féral claims that a performance does not speak of anything nor does it imitate anything; it escapes from every delusion and representation and takes place without having neither a past nor a future,<sup>20</sup> «as a machine working with serial signifiers: pieces of bodies... as well as pieces of meaning... bits of objects joined together in

multipolar concatenations".<sup>21</sup> Nick Kaye combines the post-modern with the "accident-what accompanies", with what simply happens, supporting that this happening produces its own forms and its own theatricality,<sup>22</sup> leaving out every reference, except the reference to itself and denying the process of representation itself — as Philip Auslander will also write.<sup>23</sup> David George argues that "performance offers a rediscovery of the now; relocation in the here; return to the primacy of experience, of the event; [...] a reassertion that things and people are what they do" and he adds that "performance itself is a strange reality, its qualities radically different from those we experience in other realities".<sup>24</sup> Anthony Howell differentiates representation from repetition, attributing a conscious goal to the first and an unconscious function to the second. Thus, «representational theatre is a theatre of the conscious mind: it uses imitation to reflect the social will. Repetition, on the other hand, is often unconscious... In its non-representational, repetitive mode, performance art is an art of the unconscious".<sup>25</sup>

But Fischer-Lichte, herself, in a previous work regarding theatricality, describes the characteristics of postmodern theatre by focusing a.) on a displacement of linear time by a discontinuous sequence of independent moments, structured rhythmically, b.) on the domination of the uncoded theatrical sign systems, which, in this way, emphasize the materiality of the actor's body and c.) on the deconstruction of the theatrical space and on the invitation of the spectator's eye to wander between different points in space.<sup>26</sup> The stage loses its uniform character and the collectiveness of the public is lost with it: the subjective conditions of participation of each spectator separately are now in the main goals of the stage production, so that each spectator would proceed to a subjective creation of theatrical reality, to a continuous game of partial points of view, none of which are stable, secure or complete.<sup>27</sup> In the postmodern theatrical environment, the function of representation is idle and the expressive and correlative function prevails.<sup>28</sup> The stage act does not represent, it does not imitate, it does not project another given and pre-existing reality, the stage is not the model of a different place and a different time, in which spectators must take part without differentiations and important deviations. The stage does not convey any kind of reality to the spectators, but shows them how "realities" are created. The spectators, while participating in the scenic action, learn to create realities, each one following his or her own path of creativity. This means two things: firstly, that the theatre is art, as well as an experimental process of knowledge and secondly, that the theatre is an adequate reality, an adequate entity of reference and as a result, it does not need to refer to anything else outside of itself. But this change is not without consequences for the gnoseological background of the theatre as well, and for its broader epistemological standard: the subject of knowledge can not be separated clearly from its object. The spectators and the performers are the cognitive subjects, while the processes of creating reality and the on stage reality are the cognitive objects. The cognitive process consists in the creation of individual realities on behalf of the spectators and no longer in the re-cognition of a re-presented reality. Fischer-Lichte calls "theatricality" this capacity of the theatre to trigger such processes<sup>29</sup> — a very interesting meaning as it opens the discussion towards the theatrical metaphor,

the theatricalization of the social life and the largest range of theatrical art.

However, such an approach of the representative process, apart from the questions provoked regarding the subjectivity of knowledge and the dangers it is exposed to from its relativistic program, implies that the scenic reality itself is unmediated, that what the spectators see has no precedent, that the theatrical act does not substitute anything previous, that the established cultural markers are not important for any pre-activation of a certain anticipation, of a horizon of expectations in the audience,<sup>30</sup> that behind the performance there is not this minimum "text" which penetrates it and gives it meaning, and that, lastly, the spectators come to the theatre or elsewhere without being drawn by something which pre-exists to their arrival, but with their encyclopedia neutralized, their memory inactive, with a void in their horizon of expectations and with the reservoirs of their experiences empty. Though, as Herbert Blau has noted, "there is nothing more illusory in performance than the illusion of the unmediated", since what is discerned every time is a combined total of stored experiences.<sup>31</sup>

In their understandable effort to deal with the "hyper-contextuality"<sup>32</sup> of performance and to accentuate the true theatricality, these theories seem to suppress the obvious: that the communication between performers and spectators is not a communication of angels, but of people, social human beings that is, with given memories of history and social experiences, with given cultural origins and knowledge, with inalienable values, beliefs, interests and objectives, namely with references. There is no spectator or performer without a minimum "text" in their starting point of action. And because "I participate in something" it means "I interpret this something" and at the same time "I interpret myself interpreting this something" that is to say I am conscious of my interpreting and participative action, my starting points are always called upon to play an important role when I go up on stage or when I watch from the audience.

However, which starting points are activated in a body that is being operated on or that is brazenly demystifying its erotic zones? Is there a minimum text here which supports these performances? The answer is obviously positive. Not even Orlan's operations<sup>33</sup> or the sexual displays of Annie Sprinkle<sup>34</sup> can be perceived without this minimum text. The bodies of the two performers constitute, to some degree, given meanings, since they are culturally branded. There are of course, those opinions which consider the scenic body as neutralized from the culture meanings, relieved of meanings and significances, with other reasons: transformed to a blank surface, on which "new" meanings can be recorded, "new" energies can be engraved and "unprecedented" glances can be developed. But this body must be artificial and not alive; it must remind us of a type of anthropoid, an embodied marionette because the human body can never be completely emptied from the meanings it embodies. (Even in the Nazi camps, the prisoners' bodies came to know pain, humiliation, injury, illness, even emaciation, but they never ceased meaning something.)

From the moment that the body is exposed on stage it can only be a sign. It may not refer to a fictional person, or a mythical body, it *means* however the corporeity, is a sign with multiple signifieds. The body declares the sex, the age,

the race and the biological condition of the subject. The body declares a relationship with cultural norms, a position of divergence or convergence towards them: it is lean or overgrown, muscular or scrawny, well-shaped or disheveled, beautiful or ugly, alluring or repulsive. The body moves, strikes poses, dances or ostentatiously stands still, gestures or exercises: in motion, in a stylized stance, in dance, in motionlessness, in gestures, and in exercise, we cannot overlook the social content, the historical indication, the cultural attribute, the stereotypical forms and the prototypes that are activated during the communication with the spectators. Therefore, Fischer-Lichte's phrase, "the body is simply present onstage, going through the motions without meaning anything."<sup>35</sup> is at risk of remaining without meaning especially if we accept another one of her positions, that "the human body never exists as pure nature, apart from history."<sup>36</sup> The "simple presence" leads us back to a pure nature, unmediated, inaccessible even in cultural meanings. But the cultural and historical processes occupy human life from the moment of birth until the moment of death. That is to say, in every moment the body is culturally and historically determined. Hence, "at the most basic level, everything in the theatre and the theatregoing process has meaning."<sup>37</sup>

Let us take a look at the bodies of the performers of Jan Fabre that move with an identical reiteration or those in the performances of Robert Wilson, that move in slow motion: none are "simply" on stage; they all constitute a reservoir of meanings through memories, which are stored in our theoretically "sign-less" bodies and are modified during the performance into different meanings.<sup>38</sup> There is a contradiction in the attempt to convince that "the actor's body is not used ... as material for an art(ificial) figure, but in its materiality itself as an art work,"<sup>39</sup> from the moment that we consider that this body is not a sign of culture. Of the two one must prevail: either it is a sign and activates, through the spectators eyes, meanings and significances from the huge cultural reserve or it is not a sign and is used as material for the scenic "construction".

The experience of the performance, just like every human experience, is an ambivalent experience and is torn between the mental process and the physical participation, the explanation and the understanding, the freedom and the restriction, the attention of others and the concern with oneself. The average situation, in which conscience is conceived during its theatrical experience, presupposes this minimum text, this minimum thematic-empirical unit of oneself and of the other. In the transcendence of subjectivity or objectivity, an initial presence of the subject and object is implied, a presence which will be transcended. The ambivalence ceases to exist from the moment that the two poles of the theatrical experience are cancelled. And ambivalence is the threshold of historical dimension. Herbert Blau will tell us, "A theatrical audience without history is not a theatrical audience,"<sup>40</sup> but the same applies on stage as well: an actor without history is not an actor, but an angel, the performance itself without history is not a performance, but a strong abstraction.

We reach the same conclusion if we examine the two major performance's functions, which Jean Alter discerns, the referential and the representative. We could elaborate satisfactorily on the range of the referential function, so that

it does not only include "the reference to a story that takes place in a mental space outside the stage",<sup>41</sup> in a text, theatrical or not, which pre-exists with regard to a performance and which either directly or indirectly is related to it, but any other "text" that is latently developed in the starting points of the performance, whether it is expressed or unexpressed. In other words, the referential function of a performance also includes the latent ideologies of the contributors of the performance and the spectators, as well as the aspirations or the desires which arise from these ideologies, the attitudes towards life, the ideas and formed behaviors, the experiences of other performances, the aesthetic preferences and the theoretical orientations, the mnemonic content, the specific mental and physical characteristics, the broader knowledge of individual and collective relationships, of the historical past or the social present, that which we name minimum "text" of a performance. On the other hand, the representative function focuses on the here and the presentness of the theatrical event, it re-locates and chronologically re-arranges all of the elements of the performance to the here and now, to the characteristic of the directly experienced, the direct contact of the actors (or the performers) and of the spectators and it includes the demonstration of capabilities and abilities, the presentation of talent, the resourcefulness, the power of imagination, the projection of artistic choices on the stage scenery, the music, the stage direction, the lighting and the costumes, the make-up, etc.

The two functions co-exist and interact with various ways and to different degrees each time. However, co-existence does not mean synchrony, as noted by Alter. Usually, the absorption in one function excludes or at least significantly limits the other. For example, the actor who focuses on the display of his motional abilities will be obliged to take his attention away from the dramatic character or the imaginary "figure" that he is depicting or presenting on stage. The spectator who pays a great deal of attention to the actors' costumes or the scenery will distance himself to a certain degree from the fictional world of the play or the performance. But one function cannot, by any means eliminate the other. Their internal rivalry can not hide the reciprocal support that one provides to the other.<sup>42</sup>

Even at such spectacles, (e.g. dancing, the circus or athletic events) where the representative function seems to completely dominate, the support of the referential function exists. On the other hand, referentiality would not be possible if it was not supported and strengthened by the representativeness of the event. I understand a hidden or apparent reference, I decode a message, I detect an ideological trace or a philosophical core, I visit mnemonic or unconscious places through the performativity of the spectacle which unfolds before me. The referential world of a performance has its roots in the representativeness of the spectacle, at the very moment that the representative world of the spectacle gains its meaning through its references.

**T**he reciprocity of performance's functions also places intertextuality in the center of the discussion. We should return to the concept of intertextuality and consider it in an extended version, in which not only do the texts *stricto sensu* take part, but also all of the intentional and unintentional, expressed or sub-expressed correlations<sup>43</sup>



between the multiple and heterogeneous "material" of a specific performance and the theatrical (or non-theatrical) sources of the past, which this performance recalls, activates and constitutes as a theme to various degrees and in various ways. Just as the memory of the texts transfers elements from one text to another, bridging the past with the present, comprising a "mine" of references and excerpts, in the same manner the rest of the scenic systems disclose a mnemonic function which connects them to the relevant systems of past performances. The "guidelines" of stage direction leave the thoughts of a stage director with great difficulty, even when he changes his perspective and moves on to other types of performances and other categories of work. The same applies to a stage designer or a costume designer: the aesthetic codes of their "style" are present, either through the repetition of specific choices of the past in newer works or through the opposition to these choices.<sup>44</sup> Many objects of scenery appear and reappear on stage identical, attributing not only to the space, but to the entire production meanings and memories from past performances of the same and different works in which they had "participated". The stage area itself, as well as the theatrical area, in which it is recorded, often project strong mnemonic fields, so that a completely *empty* area is inconceivable.<sup>45</sup> A memory of a sign which, as Ann Ubersfeld would say,<sup>46</sup> is not limited only to the framework of a specific performance, but it stretches back to the past, to signs and systems of signs from past performances. Memory activates the past in the present and with another formulation: it activates the present through the past. Just like the texts speak to each other, with an internal dialogue, the systems of scenery of the performances are always sharing a dialogue between themselves as well, in a -at times visible or other times invisible- network of dense or scarce references or self-references. The younger actor, consciously or unconsciously converses with this older, alive or dead colleagues based on the embodiment of a common role or a similar interpretive attribute, since "even in death, the actors' roles tend to remain with them".<sup>47</sup>

The spectator, on his end, is always an open Erwartungs-horizont and a rich "encyclopedic" world, ready to spring into action, to influence and be influenced by the action on stage. The spectator becomes the binding object of another, equally important dialogue, between the memory of the performances he has attended in the past and the experience of the performance he has in the present. From a general point of view, he is never a spectator of just one performance, but he also experiences the reverberations and shadows, even the ghosts of past performances. Therefore, the understanding of the performance is not the result of a reflection of the action on stage on him, but presupposes a mutual designation of the spectator by the performance and of the performance by the spectator. In addition, during the comprehension, the spectator carries with him the entire load of his theatrical (as well as the non-theatrical) "encyclopedia" surpassing by far the role of the simple spectator, who is watching almost passively a performance being given by others and becomes the potential coordinator of many performances, the orchestrator of many memories and experiences, the stage director of disparate knowledge, ideologies and emotional contents. Even in the post-modern version of the performances, during which the spectator "has an

experience of Self as a decentralized subject",<sup>48</sup> the spectator can only direct himself as a decentralized subject, in other words to perceive himself in a process of decentralization, where the "center", the encyclopedic load, the ideological references or the intertextual underlying layer is, one way or another, present.

Therefore, the production and the comprehension of a performance are constituted by elements, forces, forms and actions which reappear from the past to the present, with various ways and at different degrees of intensity. Marvin Carlson states it expressly, by saying that "the theatre has been obsessed always with things that return, that appear again tonight, even though his obsession has been manifested in quite different ways in different cultural situations. Everything in the theatre, the bodies, the materials utilized, the language, the space itself, is now and has always been haunted, and that haunting has been an essential part of the theatre's meaning to and reception by its audiences in all time and all places".<sup>49</sup>

Of course, this extended intertextuality that weaves the web of each theatrical or representative action should not, in any case, be perceived as a restriction of the authenticity of this action. No human action is purely repetitive. Even when there is repetition of an idea, of a form or of a relationship, the repetition is never exact or "pure", since the subject (performer or spectator) that does or engages in the repetition is never the same, nor does he receive the repeated, or even the repetition itself, the same way each time. There is always something that surpasses our knowledge and experience. A performance, even though it assimilates elements from other performances, creates experiences which can only partially be interpreted from the experiences of past performances, the elements of the other performances are placed in new contexts, the illocutionary and perlocutionary intents change during the speech acts, while even the reception of a performance, (and not just the performance itself), can be considered as a new work, to the degree that the interpretation is an analytical component of the significance of the work of art.<sup>50</sup> But the interpretation presupposes, implicitly or explicitly, a support of the theory. Without an "atmosphere" of a theory, without knowledge of the history of the theatre, the theatrical space simply remains a common place and nothing more. Therefore, every performance maintains its independence, its unique character, but this does not mean that it can be described or interpreted without a produced or an 'under production' meaning. As different as a performance can be considered from one cultural or social context to another, it does not cease to refer to certain meanings, as well as to past performances that are associated with these meanings. Basically, the non-repetitiveness does not conflict with the intertextuality, to the degree that the spectator is the final recipient: since the performer addresses his thoughts and memory, his glance, his imagination or his ideological origins, the support on the under layer of the encyclopedia for the establishment of a new meaning is a given fact, as well as the recording of the performance, in history: in the history of theatrical performances and the personal "history" of the spectator.

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## (ENDNOTES)

- <sup>1</sup> Marco de Marinis, *The Semiotics of Performance*, (Bloomington and Indianapolis: Indiana University Press, 1993), 51. See also Walter Puchner, *The Semiotics of Theatre*, (Athens: Pairidis, 1985), 23, (in Greek), J. Dines Johansen-Svend Erik Larsen-Ane Grethe Østergaard, "Semiotics", in André Helbo-J. Dines Johansen-Patris Pavis-Anne Ubersfeld, eds, *Approaching Theatre*, (Bloomington and Indianapolis: Indiana University Press, 1991, 92-134), 102, 104, Tadeusz Kowzan, *Spectacle et signification*, (Cadiac, Quebec: Les Éditions Balzac, 1992), 61, Erika Fischer-Lichte, *The Semiotics of Theater*, (Bloomington & Indianapolis: Indiana University Press, 1992), 6-7, Fernando de Toro, *Theatre Semiotics. Text and Staging in Modern Theatre*, (Toronto-Buffalo: University of Toronto Press, 1995), 13.
- <sup>2</sup> Antonin Artaud, *The theatre and its Double*, (Greek Translation, Athens: Dodoni, n.d.), 86.
- <sup>3</sup> Peggy Phelan, *Unmarked. The Politics of Performance*, (London & New York: Routledge, 1993), 146-166.
- <sup>4</sup> Johannes Birringer, *Theatre, Theory, Postmodernism*, (Bloomington & Indianapolis: Indiana University Press, 1991), 45.
- <sup>5</sup> Josette Féral: "Performance and Theatricality: The Subject Demystified", *Modern Drama* 20, 1, (1982): 179.
- <sup>6</sup> Antonin Artaud, 28.
- <sup>7</sup> Ibid, 31.
- <sup>8</sup> Jacques Derrida, *La dissémination*, (Paris: Seuil, 1972), 221.
- <sup>9</sup> Ibid, 234.
- <sup>10</sup> Erika Fischer-Lichte, *The Show and the Gaze. A European Perspective*, (Iowa City: University of Iowa Press, 1997), 317.
- <sup>11</sup> In her contribution "Culture as Performance. Defining a Concept of Performance", during the First International Conference: "Theatre and Theatre Studies in the 21th Century", Department of Theatre Studies, University of Athens, (28/9-1/10/2005).
- <sup>12</sup> Erika Fischer-Lichte, *Theatre, Sacrifice, Ritual: Exploring Forms of Political Theatre*, (London & New York: Routledge, 2005), 19-29.
- <sup>13</sup> Ibid, 26.
- <sup>14</sup> Judith Butler, "Performative Acts and Gender Constitution", in Sue-Ellen Case, ed., *Performing Feminisms: Feminist Critical Theory and Theatre*, (Baltimore and London: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1990), 270-282.
- <sup>15</sup> Judith Butler, 272.
- <sup>16</sup> Ibid, 277.
- <sup>17</sup> Chantal Pontbriand, "The Eye Finds No Fixed Point on Which to Rest...", *Modern Drama* 25, (1982): 155.
- <sup>18</sup> Ibid, 157.
- <sup>19</sup> Ibid, 158.
- <sup>20</sup> Josette Féral, 177.
- <sup>21</sup> Josette Féral, 178-179. See also Philip Auslander, *Presence and Resistance. Postmodernism and Cultural Politics in Contemporary American Performance*, (Ann Arbor: The University of Michigan Press, 1994), 44-50.
- <sup>22</sup> Nick Kaye, *Postmodernism and Performance*, (London: Macmillan, 1994), 22.
- <sup>23</sup> Philip Auslander, 31.
- <sup>24</sup> David E.R. George, "Performance Epistemology", *Performance Research* 1/1, (1996): 25.
- <sup>25</sup> Anthony Howell, *The Analysis of Performance Art. A Guide to its Theory and Practice*, (Amsterdam: Harwood Academic Publishers, 1999), 31.
- <sup>26</sup> Erika Fischer-Lichte, *The Show and the Gaze*, 69.
- <sup>27</sup> Barbara Freedman: *Staging the Gaze*, (Ithaca, New York: Cornell University Press, 1991), 74.
- <sup>28</sup> Erika Fischer-Lichte, *The Show and the Gaze*, 70.
- <sup>29</sup> Ibid, 103.
- <sup>30</sup> Susan Bennett, *Theatre Audiences: A Theory of Production and Reception*, (London: Routledge, 1990), 114.
- <sup>31</sup> Herbert Blau, "Universals of Performance; or Amortizing Play", in Richard Schechner-Willa Appel, eds, *By Means of Performance. Intercultural Studies of Theatre and Ritual*, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1991), 253..
- <sup>32</sup> Shannon Jackson, *Professing Performance. Theatre in the Academy from Philology to Performativity*, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2004), 6.
- <sup>33</sup> Barbara Rose, "Is it Art? Orlan and the Transgressive Act", *Art in America* 81,2, (1993): 82-87, Philip Auslander, *From Acting to Performance. Essays in Modernism and Postmodernism*, London & New York: Routledge, 1997), 128-136, Savvas Patsalidis, *From Representation to Presentation. A Study of Limits and margins*, (Athens: Hellenica Grammata, 2004, in Greek), 294-315.
- <sup>34</sup> See Rebecca Schneider, "After Us the Savage Goddess. Feminist Performance art of the Explicit Body Staged, Uneasily, Across Modernist Dreamscapes", in Elin Diamond ed., *Performance and Cultural Politics*, (London & New York: Routledge, 1996), 155-176.
- <sup>35</sup> Erika Fischer-Lichte, *The Show and the Gaze*, 105.
- <sup>36</sup> Ibid, 27.
- <sup>37</sup> Ibid, p.25.
- <sup>38</sup> See Marvin Carlson, *The haunted stage. The theatre as memory machine*, (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 2001), 52-95.
- <sup>39</sup> Erika Fischer-Lichte, *The Show and the Gaze*, 105.
- <sup>40</sup> Herbert Blau, "Odd, Anonymous Needs: The Audience in a Dramatized Society", *Performing Arts Journals* 10,1, (1987): 34.
- <sup>41</sup> Jean Alter, *A Sociosemiotic Theory of Theatre*, (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1990), 31.
- <sup>42</sup> Ibid, 32.
- <sup>43</sup> Marco de Marinis, *The Semiotics of Performance*, 131-132.
- <sup>44</sup> Marvin Carlson, *The haunted stage*, 96-130.
- <sup>45</sup> Ibid, 131-164.
- <sup>46</sup> Ann Ubersfeld, *Lire le théâtre 2. L'école du spectateur*, (Paris : Éditions sociales, 1981), 268-269.
- <sup>47</sup> Joseph Roach, *Cities of Dead: Circum-Atlantic Performance*, (New York: Columbia University Press, 1996), 78. See also Michael Quinn, "Celebrity and the Semiotics of Acting", *New Theatre Quarterly* 4 (1990): 154-161.
- <sup>48</sup> Erika Fischer-Lichte, *The Show and the Gaze*, 59.
- <sup>49</sup> Marvin Carlson: *The haunted stage*, 15.
- <sup>50</sup> Arthur C. Danto: *The Transfiguration of the Common Place*, (Athens: Metahmio, 2004, in Greek), 208.

## CONCEPTS OF SPACE IN PHYSICS AND PHILOSOPHY AND THEIR TRACES ON ARCHITECTURAL THEORY AND DESIGN

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One would live a rather limited life should one aspire to a concept of the world belonging to the past, comfortable and familiar as it were but less challenging and fitting in with a rather limited expanse of imagination than the one prevalent in one's own era. By daring to live in a world formed on the basis of concepts at the forefront of human knowledge and sensibility one places himself in a position that grants him access to "sensing" and "experiencing" the kind of life that this world entails and circumscribes.<sup>1</sup> This applies especially to the concept of space.

It is the contention of this author that it is specifically architecture, being an art that employs space as its foremost tool, which must and does seek to unveil the relevance of the concept of space of each epoch to human life. This paper endeavors to reveal evidence that, in critical moments in history, architecture has in fact attempted either in theory or in built form to present a new conceptualization of the world whenever new philosophical conceptions or relevant discoveries in physics have led to significant transformations of the concept of space. Clearly, architecture is not influenced by this concept alone but by various other concerns and aspirations. The concept of space is, however, one of the most fundamental, although it often remains less pronounced among the multiplicity of issues tackled by major architectural movements, and our aim is to discuss some of its salient manifestations.

Since antiquity the concept of space stood at the basis of the development of architectural ideas and exerted a significant influence on their formation. At that time, there was hardly any differentiation between philosophy, mathematics, and the observation of natural phenomena. The ideas developed by the Presocratic and particularly the Pythagorean philosophers in the 5<sup>th</sup> and 4<sup>th</sup> century B.C. held that space and void were two distinct entities.<sup>2</sup> The void enveloped space, while space itself generated some kind of pressure or tension by virtue of which it formed boundaries to the physical bodies and did not

let them become infinitely great or small.<sup>3</sup> Void was thought as equivalent to chaos which inspired awe and fear.<sup>4</sup>

These notions seem to have formed the psychological basis that lead to fundamental decisions for the planning of sacred sites. The planning method was clearly anthropocentric and was based, according to a theory, on a system of polar coordinates emanating from the point of view of an observer in standing position at the site's main entrance. This system placed the various buildings in an angular spatial relationship to each other and even remote landscape formations were calculated to partake into the system while no view of a remote void was ever permitted to penetrate it.<sup>5</sup> Thus, a powerful concentration of internal relationships between spaces and forms was protected from any intercession of the void within the formation which might threaten to cause its disintegration.

Certain philosophers regarded space as possessing an anisotropic character, that is, it varied in quality depending on orientation and location content.<sup>6</sup> Correspondingly, it can plainly be observed that the spatial arrangement of buildings within a sacred precinct exhibits a distinctly anisotropic character of orientation, size, and weight as well. This absence of clearly distinguishable regularities of arrangement has lead modern scholarship up until recently to the conviction that sacred precincts were but enclosures of randomly or freely placed buildings (Fig.1).

Around the same time, a diverse philosophical system was developed by the Atomists<sup>7</sup> who thought that void and space did not differ in nature and the void was necessary for the existence of the atoms of matter and consequently it was

<sup>3</sup> Jammer, 1997, p. 13. Also see Simplicius, *Physika* 108 a.

<sup>4</sup> Hesiod's "chaos" the earliest known expression of the concept of universal space was emotionally charged, Jammer, p.10. Also see Hesiod, *Theogonia*, 116.

<sup>5</sup> This ensues from the study by K. Doxiades, *Architectural Space in Ancient Greece*, MIT Press, Boston, 1972.

<sup>6</sup> Plato (5<sup>th</sup> c. B.C.) and Epicurus (4<sup>th</sup> c. B.C.) clearly express the idea that space is anisotropic. However, these ideas appear to also originate in Pythagorean philosophy. Jammer, 1997, p.16, 18-9. See also Plato, *Timaeus*, 52 d and F.M. Cornford, *Plato's cosmology*, Harcourt, Brace, New York, 1937, p. 198. The anisotropic concept persists even in Aristotle (4<sup>th</sup> c. B.C.). Aristotle, *Physica*, 211 a, Loeb Classical Library, Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1929, v.1, p. 303.

<sup>7</sup> Among the Atomists were Leucippus (5<sup>th</sup> c. B.C.) from Miletus, and Democritus (4<sup>th</sup> c. B.C.) from Abdera. Th. Pelegrinis, *Lexiko Philosophias* (Greek).

<sup>1</sup> This sums up a basic idea developed in Carl G. Jung, *Modern Man in Search of a Soul*, New York: Harvest Books, 1933.

<sup>2</sup> See the Pythagorean philosophy of Philolaus (5<sup>th</sup> c. B.C.) and Archytas (4<sup>th</sup> c. B.C.) Max Jammer, *Concepts of Space*, (Greek), Panepistimiakes Ekdoseis Kritis, 1997, p.12-13.

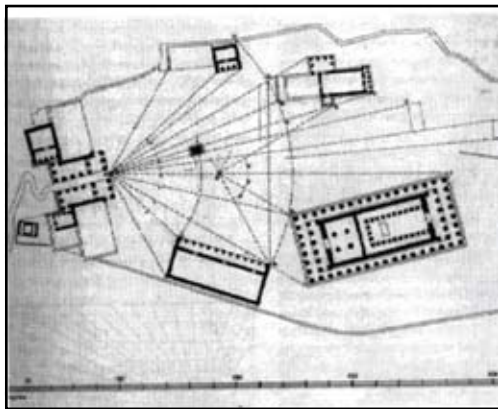


Fig. 1: Acropolis, Athens, 5<sup>th</sup> century B.C., Plan (after K. Doxiades)

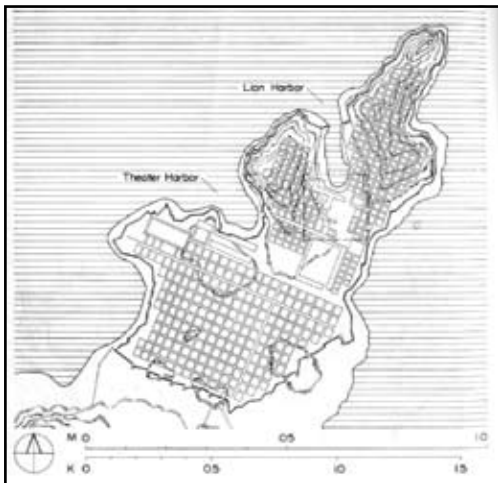


Fig. 2: Hippodamian grid, city of Miletus, Asia Minor, 5<sup>th</sup> c. B.C. (source S. Kostof, fig. 7.5)

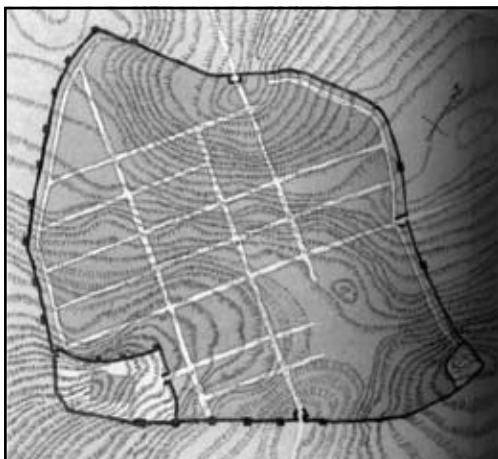


Fig. 3: Cosa, Italy, 3<sup>rd</sup> c. B.C. The grid develops in spite of the ground relief. (Kostof, 1991, fig. 109)

equivalent to space not filled with matter.<sup>8</sup> Since all atoms were considered to be identical the only variation permitted by the atomic theory was that of arrangement. Apart from that, space and matter were each in its own right essentially homogeneous. The idea of homogeneous space seems to have found its equivalent in city configurations that became expansive following a repetitive pattern such as the new city of Miletus (5<sup>th</sup> c. B.C.), designed after the Hippodamian system.<sup>9</sup> The same idea seems to be advocated by Euclidean geometry (developed at the end of 4<sup>th</sup> c. B.C.) as well which, however, dealt mostly with planar forms whereas its solid geometry did not address the greater problem of spatial expansion remaining focused on the form of solid bodies.<sup>10</sup>

A kind of rectilinear grid pre-existed in Egypt and Mesopotamia which was, though, of quite different character. It was linear rather than rectilinear and was not systematic in any way. The systematic grid appears to have been an Ionian breakthrough<sup>11</sup> and to have been connected to certain philosophical principles and social theories.<sup>12</sup>

The concept of isotropic and infinite space became more powerfully expressed in Roman times. The homogeneity and infinity of space is strongly advocated by Lucretius (1<sup>st</sup> c. B.C.). The idea of its anisotropic nature still remains being limited, however, to the vertical direction.<sup>13</sup> Respectively, in that period the city grid becomes the planning norm which even though it constitutes an evolution of older linear systems acquires now a clear philosophical basis.<sup>14</sup> While the grid system, as used in Miletus and other Greek cities, was placed on a predominantly flat area in Roman cities often appears to develop in spite of the topography.

During the 17<sup>th</sup> century, in attempting to draw the faithful away from the reformation and back into the arms of the Catholic Church, Baroque architecture adopted a more energetic vocabulary which would capture the attention of the congregation in an almost magnetic fashion. For this purpose, and since the classical vocabulary could not be abandoned, the new architecture assumed an attitude most clearly expressed in Guarini's phrase: "Architecture can correct the rules of Antiquity, and invent new ones".<sup>15</sup> What became of paramount importance during the Baroque period were the optical issues. This becomes evident as early as Teofilo Gallacini's (1564-1641) theoretical work titled *Trattato Sopra gli Errori degli Architetti* where he discusses the apparent proportion of St. Peter's dome from the observer's point of view.<sup>16</sup>

Francesco Borromini, one of the foremost architects of

<sup>8</sup> Jammer, 1997, p.13-4.

<sup>9</sup> Named after Hippodamos, ancient Greek sophist, architect and urban planner of the 5<sup>th</sup> c. B.C. from Miletus. Apart from his own city he also planned the city of Piraeus, Rhodes, and Thurium in Magna Grecia. *Sturgis' Illustrated Dictionary of Architecture and Building*, New York: Dover Publ., 1902. For a detailed account see Spiro Kostof, *A History of Architecture, Settings and Rituals*, 2<sup>nd</sup> ed., New York: Oxford Univ. Press, 1995, pp. 141-3. It may not be a coincidence that Leucippus, considered as the founder of Atomism, was also from Miletus.

<sup>10</sup> Jammer, 1997, p. 32-3.

<sup>11</sup> Kostof, 1995, p. 141.

<sup>12</sup> Aristotle, *Politics*, VII, 10, 4 in Kostof, 1995, p. 142.

<sup>13</sup> Jammer, 1997, p. 16-7.

<sup>14</sup> Jammer, 1997, p. 19

<sup>15</sup> Guarini Guarini was one of the most important Baroque architects and theoreticians, Krufft, 1994, p.106, also see Nino Carboneri, Bianca Tavassi La Greca, (eds.), *Guarini*, Milan, 1968, p.15f

<sup>16</sup> Krufft, 1994, p. 103.

this period experimented with optical issues as most of his contemporaries did. He did so fervently, however, seeking at the same time the sanctioning of his designs in ancient precedents. He discovered, for instance, in Montano's published drawings<sup>17</sup> of ancient Roman buildings proof that the optical effects he was trying to achieve in his Palazzo Spada colonnade had a precedent in Roman architecture<sup>18</sup>. To be solidly based in terms of precedents was as important to him as to use for a guide the constructive principles of Nature<sup>19</sup>, since if this condition had not been he could be accused of volatility. But what was in his mind when speaking of nature? During the Renaissance, Leon Battista Alberti related nature to geometry, while Palladio to simple arithmetical relations.<sup>20</sup> By the 17<sup>th</sup> century the identification of nature with mathematics had become a widely held belief clearly expressed in the writings of the physicist Galileo Galilei (1564-1642). He wrote that "the great book of nature . . . is written in the language of mathematics, and its characters are triangles, circles, and other geometrical figures without which it is humanly impossible to understand a single word of it". Galileo's writings were much studied in intellectual circles in Rome and it is from him that Borromini derived his conception of nature.<sup>21</sup> Borromini stated, for his *Villa Pampili* design, that ". . . the whole building would be a study in applied mathematics".<sup>22</sup>

He also observed the relation of the building to the human body, an ancient conviction which, however, acquired a new perspective in his mind in which the similarity of the building to the human body should not confine itself to the upright standing position but should be seen as a living body that could even make a gesture to the passer by.<sup>23</sup> Such an attempt seems to have taken visible form in several of his designs (Fig. 4).

Through Galileo he probably learned about Kepler's (1571-1630) discovery of the elliptical planetary paths, announced in 1609,<sup>24</sup> an idea which Borromini seems to have attempted to incorporate into his design for *San Carlo alle Quattro Fontane* (1634)<sup>25</sup> even though Galileo himself opposed Kepler's findings.<sup>26</sup> According to a modern art historian and critic the ellipse had already been used in the Mannerist period.<sup>27</sup> In his plan, Borromini attempted to reach the generation of an ellipse through the combination of more regular shapes such as the ones described by Galileo.

The experience generated within that church would have been truly unique to the visitor of that era. The eye cannot truly cope with the presence of the ellipse and

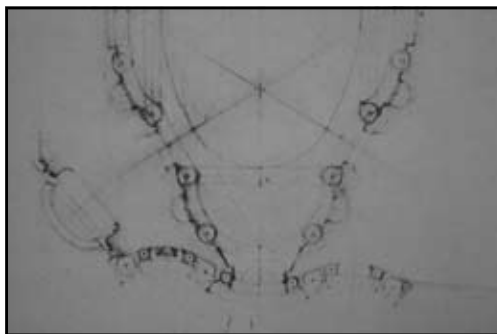


Fig. 4: *San Carlo alle Quattro Fontane*, Rome, Half plan, 1634 (Blunt, 1979, fig. 48)

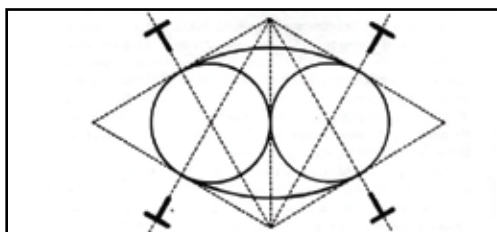


Fig. 5: *San Carlo alle Quattro Fontane*, 1634, diagram of plan (Blunt, 1979, fig. 39)

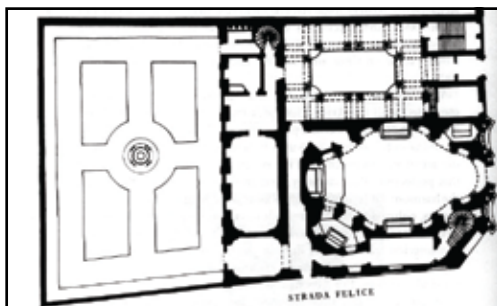


Fig. 6: *San Carlo alle Quattro Fontane*, plan, 1634 (Blunt, 1979, fig. 38)

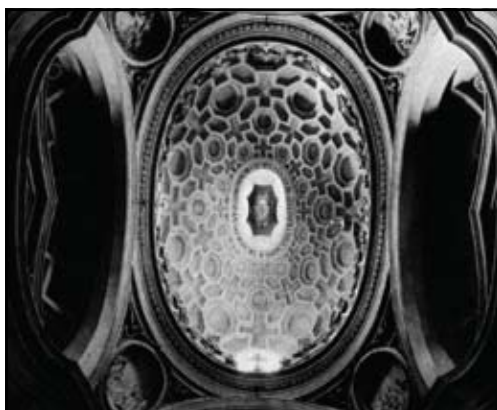


Fig. 7: *San Carlo alle Quattro Fontane*, Rome, dome (Blunt, 1979, fig. 52)

<sup>17</sup> The architect Giovanni Battista Montano (1534-1621) published reconstructions of Roman buildings in *Li Cinque Libri di Architettura*, (between 1624-1664), displaying perspective effects of which Borromini made use. Blunt, 1979, p.41, and Krufft, 1994, p.105.

<sup>18</sup> Blunt, 1979, p. 43-45

<sup>19</sup> Krufft, 1994, p. 105, Blunt, 1979, p. 46.

<sup>20</sup> Blunt, 1979, p. 47.

<sup>21</sup> Ibid.

<sup>22</sup> Ibid., p. 50.

<sup>23</sup> Ibid., p. 51.

<sup>24</sup> John Garrahy and Peter Gay (eds.), *The Columbia History of the World*, New York: Harper and Row Publishers, 1981, p. 687

<sup>25</sup> Krufft, 1994, p. 105, Blunt, 1979, p.47.

<sup>26</sup> Rudolf Arnheim, *Visual Thinking*, Berkeley: University of California Press, 1997, p. 277-8

<sup>27</sup> Erwin Panofsky, *Galileo as a Critic of the Arts*, The Hague: Nijhoff, 1954, pp. 20ff.



Fig. 8: Newton's Cenotaph, 1783 (Trachtenberg & Hyman, 1986, fig. 669)

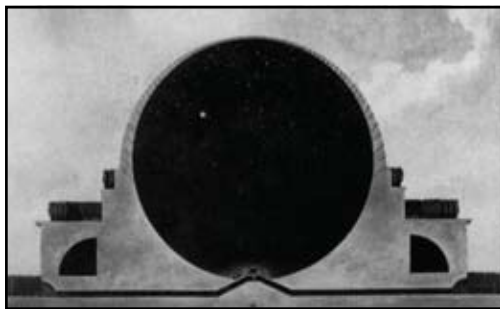


Fig. 9: Newton's Cenotaph, 1783, interior (Trachtenberg & Hyman, 1986, fig. 670)



Fig. 10: Einstein Tower, near Potsdam, Germany, 1920 (Trachtenberg and Hyman, fig. 806)

by confusing it with a circle is lead to experience fluctuating forces drawing it toward its depth and more so into its height. These undulating lines generate a flux in the senses that produces a sharp contrast to the clarity and soberness of Renaissance space. At the same time, even though it exerts a magnetic influence to the eye it has nothing in common with the sharpness and inevitability of the converging linear patterns of Gothic architecture which aims at drawing the eye in a similar magnetic fashion. Borromini's undulating curves gently entice the passer by into a journey of the senses rather than brusquely directing him.

In the 18<sup>th</sup> century the French visionary architect Etienne Louis Boullée became fascinated by the achievements of Isaac Newton (1642-1727).<sup>28</sup> Physics had revealed once more, and in a most powerful manner, the form of a new world.

Thus, Boullée attempted to envision an architectural feat of equal greatness in his honour. He designed Newton's cenotaph, as a hollow sphere of vast size representing the Earth and Newton's discoveries. This sphere was to bear numerous perforations so that in daytime an effect of a starry night sky would be reproduced inside the sphere. At night the interior would be lit up by a huge lamp. Boullée summed up the effect of his design as follows: "the effects of this great picture are, as one sees, produced by Nature".<sup>29</sup> This was, of course, an iconographic concept which could not be built at the time. It exerted, however, a disproportionate impact in following periods.

Newton's cosmology comprised a theory of space which has remained in history as the concept of "absolute space". For the first time space was considered infinite, homogeneous and isotropic. It is a vast new world with no differentiation among its parts, no particular tendencies. A space that holds each and every object in any position that this may be found. Similarly, Boullée's design presented an entirely new experience of architectural space which surpassed by far anything that had been designed to that date. It presented a truly new world in seeking to reach an entirely new architectural spatial experience both in scale and quality. While the homogeneity of the atomists may have found an equivalent in the subdivision of land in identical orderly parts, the infinity, the homogeneity and the isotropic character of the new space proposed by Newton was represented by the vastness of scale, the lack of subdivision and the feeling of a universal unity. As one moved in the interior the point of view changed but it did so imperceptibly because of the vastness of the space in relation to the speed of locomotion. Furthermore, the lack of spatial subdivisions made it impossible to sense the change while at the same time the psychological impact of the minuteness of man in respect to the vastness of the universe was dramatically brought to the fore. The essential character of the Newtonian "absolute space" had found an architectural realization.

In early 20<sup>th</sup> century the formations that appear during the period of German expressionism, are more related to form rather than space. Especially Erich Mendelsohn's work is based on Albert Einstein's theory of relativity and his field theory of space. Mendelsohn, in his attempt to incorporate Einstein's theory in the building he designed in his honour he becomes formally descriptive of the fluctuating spatial field forces generating a building which seems formed as it were by the interpenetration of such forces. The relationships of spaces within the building, however, provide an interpretation of the mystical concerns identified with the German expressionist movement rather than attempting an expressive demonstration of the Einsteinian concept of space.

<sup>28</sup> Krufft, 1994, p. 161

<sup>29</sup> Jean-Marie Pérouse de Montclos (ed.), *Etienne-Louis Boullée. Architecture: Essai sur l'art*, 1968, p. 140. Also see Helen Rosenau (ed.), *Boullée's Treatise on Architecture*, London, 1953, and Helen Rosenau, *Boullée and Visionary Architecture*, London, 1976 (with French-English text of the *Essai*).



Johannes Itten's design theory, assuming a quite different viewpoint, appears to have incorporated prevalent concepts of space in physics of his time. Itten was a Swiss painter who taught extensively in Germany and Switzerland and was the master mind that introduced the new ideas and design methods in the celebrated Bauhaus art school. Einstein's theory of relativity was published a decade earlier (1905) than the time in which Itten began his art teaching career. Itten's system was based on a system of gradations of intensity between polar opposites and the spatial interconnections of forms based on variation of their number, size and proximity. It incorporated brilliantly the field theory of space while it attempted to bring it into union with ancient philosophies and religious teachings. In his teachings, ideas of forces of attraction and repulsion were explored in shades of grey or colour or between various assemblies of shapes. Poles of concentration and poles opposing each other were thus established in the visual field.

Ludwig Mies van der Rohe's architecture followed a similar path although he was not too eloquent about his ideas. He created spaces which exerted dynamic, almost magnetic forces while he placed obstacles, such as water, in strategically selected areas in order to create empty fields and in this manner to ensure the presence of void in the visual field. Intense fields of vistas were generated through narrow vertical openings or pausing vistas generated through the absence of whole walls.

In later 20th century, there has evolved a greater consciousness among architects of the inevitable connections between physics, philosophy and architecture. Concepts of spatial warping and spatial inflections found in the work of architects such as Rem Koolhaas, Zaha Hadid and Van Berkel and Bos draw on various philosophies relating in turn to corresponding theories in physics. As a last example I will cite, here, the Moebius house by UN studio (Van Berkel and Bos) near Amsterdam which I regard as particularly important from the outlook of this paper.

The images that Van Berkel and Bos create are parts of narrative in which identifiable images or fragments are brought into play in an unfamiliar way by means of abstract forms. While, following this line of thinking, some of the earlier buildings have turned out to be clearly iconographic in character their later work delves deeper into philosophical issues and draws on Gilles Deleuze's reading of the work of Michel Foucault, in which Deleuze interprets the idea of the diagram, prevalent in deconstructivist problematics, as a characteristic, schematic map depicting a specific interpersonal and social force-field.<sup>30</sup> In these terms, Van Berkel and Bos reach a view of the city as a dynamic force field in which a multiplicity of parties and interests can have an impact on the design process: various specialists from structural engineers to building contractors, influence their designs and are labelled "mobile forces" which when brought into mutual synthesis, constitute the design. Einstein's field theory is represented here not as a generator of form *per se* but being incorporated in various aspects of human life that play a role in the form making process.

The diagram on which the Moebius house (1993-98) is based is the Moebius strip, a loop that is twisted to form a continuous surface. This topological spatial paradox is attempted to be connected with physical space by organizing the house

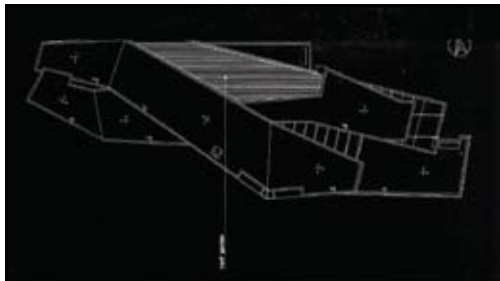


Fig. 11: Moebius house, Amsterdam, 1993, plan (top) and exterior (Lootsma, fig. 62, 65)



Fig. 12: Moebius house, Amsterdam, 1993, interior (Lootsma, fig. 63)

along a single lengthy route and by incorporating into it a 24 hour diurnal rhythm of sleep, work and meals for the inhabitants. Here a unique attempt is made to integrate the contemporary concept of space as force fields expanded to include fields of similar nature but different pattern, such as fields of process and fields of use, to a theoretical mathematical model of space unleashing yet a new dimension of spatial experience.

<sup>30</sup> Bart Lootsma, *Superdutch: New Architecture in the Netherlands*, London: Thames and Hudson, 1993, p. 55.

Every collective concept of space is instrumental to the architect's imagination for the generation of ideas and the envisioning of compositions that give expression to a universal spirit of the age surpassing his limited personal outlook.

Relevant spatial formations can, in turn, cause sensations that incite the imagination into perceiving the world in a new way, because just as physics attempts to discover the world we live in and philosophy strives to render it comprehensible, architecture endeavours to unveil the relevance of these ideas to human life and challenge us into envisioning our place in them.

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## IMAGINING THE IMPOSSIBLE

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*The imagination is one of the highest prerogatives of man. By this faculty he unites former images and ideas, independently of the will, and thus creates brilliant and novel results ...*

Charles Darwin

*What is most human is not rationalism but the uncontrolled and uncontrollable continuous surge of creative radical imagination in and through the flux of representation, affects and desires.*

Corneluis Castoriadis

### INTRODUCTION: A CRITIQUE OF THE COMPUTATIONALIST REASON

I want to believe that in the recent dynamic development in the domain that aims at providing scientific account of the nature of the mental we have advanced beyond the computational metaphor (stating that the mind is a computer), and so have come to realize that cognition is not reducible to computation, and that mental phenomena are not the same as information processing; that mathematics is a tool in the mind of investigator, not the nature of the mind we are investigating; that algorithm may be a powerful form of analysis\* but not necessarily an adequate means of representing the mental<sup>1</sup>. There are other features that uniquely characterize human mind and cognition, such as consciousness, intention, and emotion, and one of them is certainly also imagination. Though these features of the mind are not accessible to the 'third-person perspective' and cannot be fully naturalized in terms of scientific language, contemporary neuroscience is ambitious to explain "how matter becomes imagination"<sup>2</sup> Be it as it may, I want to claim that either as a matter of phenomenological introspection or an object of neurobiological inspection imagination is a crucial and constitutive trait of all cognition, and all the mental phenomena alike, including aesthetic experience.

In spite of the strong current tendency to 'de-humanize mind' (that is to equal thinking with computation and information processing) there is a possible opposing option that can affirm what is most human in our mental world, and that is our capacity of *bringing to mind what is not provided by the senses* (to use the old Aristotle's definition of imagination).

In order to provide the support for the *primacy of imagination* an extensive elaboration is required which cannot be done within this contribution; however, an attempt will be made here within a reduced scale, and I'll do so by focusing on some basic processes such as *creation of meaning* (whereby 'meaning' is not only used in linguistic terms but refers to visual and emotional contents as well. I.e. something can be meaningful on an implicit subconscious imaginary level)).

My first, and most fundamental, premise is fully in accord with the following: "The mind/brain does not represent or mirror reality; it constructs a virtual reality of its own" (Modell, 2003: 13). That again is very much on the track of Vico's philosophy in which a statement can be found that: "meaning is constructed through *imaginatively entering* into the mind of others" (quoted in Modell, 2003: 15; emphasis added).

In order to make it less general or abstract let me pinpoint to some basic features of the process of articulation of meaning, particularly metaphorical one.

### 1. The Lesson from Metaphor

After what I have called the "metaphorical turn" we have sufficient theoretical support for the claim that fixed and stable reference is a myth as it is the idea that words have well defined and strictly delineated semantic fields. Instead, we realize that metaphorical reference is open-ended, and also that semantic domains of words are rather indeterminate. However, open-endedness and indeterminacy (usually closely associated with vagueness and ambiguity) are not to be negatively classified for they are the very prerequisite for metaphor-making, as well as for interpretation and understanding of metaphors. Due to such a capacity we can make an interpretative leap beyond the

<sup>1</sup> "I join with many other critics who have also observed that algorithms cannot account for thinking in images or phantasy, for error and novelty, or for the fact that the mind can imaginatively bootstrap itself from within," Modell, 2003: xii)

<sup>2</sup> The subtitle of Edelman's and Tononi's (2000) book.

literal, and beyond the sensual, due to which deciphering of incongruent terms is possible at all. More than that, metaphor becomes an intellectual tool capable of bridging the familiar and unfamiliar, the known and unknown, and in the final instance of making "impossible" juxtapositions intelligible. It can justifiably be recognized as a means of semantic creation. The *metaphorical man* can successfully get along with it only if s/he is ready to extend the range of inference as to include merely possible, as well as impossible, significations.

Let me try to illustrate that by taking into account following examples. By talking about "brain fitness", "gym for intelligence" or "mental metabolism", "labyrinths of mind" etc. we conjoin the mental and the physical in a way which requires departure from the first (literal) meaning and also from the elementary logical principles. What we do in these and similar cases is a disregard of identity on which literal meaning is based. A competent language-user in principle does not even consider the literal interpretation for it cannot help and thus does not count. The only way to understand metaphor is to interpret it metaphorically. My view is in this respect in full accord with that of Eileen C. Way when she says: "Either you understand the metaphoric interpretation or you don't understand the utterance at all. (...) either it (a literary passage) is understood metaphorically or it is incomprehensible" (1991: 14). This implies that it is only by means of imaginative reading (the one that goes beyond the literal and the obvious) that can grant adequate meaning and understanding. A path from the literal to the metaphorical, from restricted reference to extended denotation, is a road to the concept of open-ended meaning or interpretation, which in turn cannot do without imagination.

Looking for the cases where semantic incompatibility is pushed to the extreme (where "A is B" is most unlikely), that is, where a need for semantic extension is best pronounced, we may end up with *oxymoron*. According to OED, oxymoron is a rhetorical figure by which contrary or incongruous terms are conjoined as to give point to a statement or expression; in its literary meaning it is self-contradictory or absurd, yet it makes a point. Couple of examples: "irrational logic", "passionate reason", "rational emotion", "live dead", "wise fool", "the logic of the heart", "embodied mind", "*festina lente*" (hasten slowly), etc.

Now the question: how is it possible that something obviously contradictory, absurd or "impossible" can still be intelligible and meaningful? To say that it is possible by means of metaphorical interpretation is but a partial answer because we're still left with the dilemma: how can this be achieved? We realize that if we literally and logically stick to the exclusiveness of the relation between the coupled terms we are unable to bridge them meaningfully. In other words, if we claim that the reasonable stays in an opposition to the emotional, there is no possibility of creating an intelligible link between the two (as for instance in the "passionate reason"). Similarly, if what is attributed to the 'heart' can by no means be logical (so that authenticity of both is defined in their mutual exclusiveness) there will always remain two separate spheres, that of the 'heart', and that of logic, which then cannot speak in any understandable form to each other. However, if we extend

sufficiently semantic fields of the contrasting terms, we might come to the outer limits of standard denotation, and then also to start to search for modes of overcoming exclusiveness (which anyhow proves to be inadequate). Instead of perceiving the polarized terms as incommensurable we might tend to see them more and more as mutually interconnected.

In overcoming 'impossible' junction between the component parts in an oxymoron, one realizes that apparent incommensurability is also interpretable, that contrasting exclusiveness can be bridged, that the opposites are not irreducible.

A step from the initial absurd to final understanding is not an insignificant one. To be able to make an intelligible link between incompatible components, and be able to overcome something as basic as contradiction, and accept that things can at the same time be and not be, be positive and be negative, be complex and be simple, etc. (as is the case in oxymoron) is indeed an act of imagination in which a language- (or metaphor-) user has to engage mental power in order to go beyond the confines of propositional thinking.

Initial "impossible" crossing of two elements in an oxymoron is thus a result of conventional meaning or understanding of these two composite parts. This very "impossibility" is measured against the set of habitual or stereotypical thinking. If an interpreter succeeds in parting from that level created of meaning s/he can at another level of interpretation meet a potential to go beyond the seemingly impossible.

From what has been just said follows that the gap between the parts\* which appear incompatible is *not given* but *created* (or rather inherited), and thus can also be revised and reread. What seems "impossible" at one time, on one level of interpretation, or from a particular point of view may turn out to be possible, if appropriate standard of competence is achieved, at another time or on another level of interpretation.

This very act requires mental and *imaginative leap* which skilled speaker practices naturally and without effort, provided, however, that his/her cognitive standard is high enough.

The lesson we can learn from what is expounded above is important for both linguistic and cognitively oriented theorist of metaphor. This ability to neglect literalness and ignore the given or apparent, and even to disobey elementary logic, and in spite of that reach a level of understanding which can not only be meaningful, but also illuminating is worth of theoretical consideration.

## 2. Structured Indeterminacy

It is essential for our symbolic system in general that it be indeterminate, that is flexible to a necessary extent. As we can learn from Hubert L. Dreyfus: "This indeterminacy plays a crucial role in human perception" (1979: 240). This is perfectly applicable to language, but also to other forms of cognition.

In language-comprehension we seem to be less ready to attribute such an importance to indeterminacy though, I am

certain, semantic indeterminism is no less productive than the visual one. For instance, in deciphering a metaphor we cannot do else but take the meaning in the sense other than the literal one. Yet, this 'otherness' is in no way given or determined but has to be sought out within the field of possible signification that requires *imaginative projections*.

I am also certain that adaptability is no less an important feature of language as it is of perception. By allowing flexible scanning throughout the field of possible meanings a speaker or listener, as well as a perceiver, practices adaptability according to which, to put it somewhat provocatively, "words can say more than they mean" (E. T. Gendlin, 1995), and, analogously I could say, pictures can mean more than they depict.

Indeterminacy, vagueness, ambiguity, adaptability, fuzziness or similar alone cannot provide full explanation of how this inference beyond the literal (and actually beyond the possible) in language and perception is achievable. Most theoretical talk about these concepts is satisfied with mere stating that there exist phenomena of the sort and at best suggest that they need not be perceived as something negative. However, there is more to this aspect of language than the suggestion above signalizes.

The mechanisms of meaning, or rather *processes* of meaning, are such that most modern accounts cannot cope with them in an adequate way, because the schemes they offer are too strict and static as to successfully model the dynamic and indeterminate fluctuation of meaning, which in addition should be open toward possible signification. It is exactly this latent or implicit *potentiality of meaning* that seems to me to be so crucial not only in metaphor-making and language-usage, but also for cognition in general.

It is justifiable to say that we live in the world of possible meanings more than in the world of actual (literal) meanings, the same way it is possible to say that we rely more on the imaginary (or unseen) than on the presently given (actually seen). Yet we still feel uneasy in admitting the relevance of these elements, as if their acceptance and implementation in a theory would automatically mean a betrayal of objectivity and disappearance of exactness. However, this is a profound mistake for the 'exact' or so called 'hard' sciences have already deconstructed such a myth. (Because of that scientific rigor did not disappear; it has only changed its character – and maybe became more humane.)

*Scientific models are a prototype, philosophically speaking, for imaginative creation of schemes based on natural language and experience, but they go beyond it by metaphorical extension to construct symbolic worlds that may or may not adequately represent certain aspects of the empirical world. (Arbib and Hesse, 1986: 161; emphasis added)*

As support for the assumption that even science, habitually considered to be the realm of brute facts, is not freed from the sort of imaginary projections, or imaginary idealizations, could be found in Cassirer's *An Essay on Man*:

*The facts of science always imply a theoretical, which means a symbolic, element. Many, if not most, of those scientific facts which have changed the whole course of the history of science have been hypothetical facts before they became observable facts. When Galileo found his new science of dynamics he had to begin with the conception of an entirely isolated body, a body which moves without the influence of any external force. Such a body had never been observed and could never be observed. It was not an actual but a possible body – and in a sense it was not even possible, for the condition upon which Galileo based his conclusion, the absence of all external forces, is never realized in nature. (Cassirer, 1964: 58-59; emphasis added)*

The idealization of the sort could have only emerged within scientist's imagination, contrary to the empirical evidence. The imaginary turned out to be primary; the observable had to conform to the idealized projections that rooted in the scientist's imaginary projection of the "impossible".

In this context Cassirer speaks of "indirectness" (75), and a necessity of man to lift his gaze "above the sphere of immediate needs" (75). He brings the point further in that he says:

*Instead of being moved immediately by an actual stimulus, he looks to possible needs, to the satisfaction of which he prepares the means in advance. (...) The impulse does not derive solely from the force of the present; instead it belongs also to the future, which must be anticipated in some fashion in order to become effective in this way. The 'pre-presentation' of the future characterizes all human action. We must set before ourselves in 'images' something not yet an existing thing, in order, then, to proceed from this 'possibility' to the 'reality', from potency to act. (1974: 75)*

Now, to be clear, the future exists only within the act of imagination. The potential is not evident in the actually given or observable; it can only be constructed by the power of imagination.

### 3. Making Inference About the »Impossible«

It was already Descartes who explicitly stated that what is imaginable is also in a way possible. Hume put the same idea in somewhat other terms: "Nothing we imagine is absolutely impossible" (1965: 32)

Applied to the current discussion it means that there are no metaphors, no unobservable data, and no forms of aesthetic expression that are too radical, too unlikely or actually impossible. Certainly it does not mean that "anything goes" in metaphor-making, perception and art; that any arbitrary juxtaposition will do, or that meanings can be always successfully imposed. However, for the present purposes it is important to stress that (1) meanings are not in any sense given or predetermined. (2) If it is so than deciphering of meanings (verbal and other) is a sort of inference that is to be perceived as a dynamic process opened to the realm of potentiality. (3)

A precondition for any such mutation of meaning is semantic flexibility and indeterminacy that could be productively used only by an active engaging of imagination.

What seems to be purely speculative may turn out to be rewarding for understanding of the most down-to-earth things. The imaginary may prove to be an explanatory mode for understanding of empirical reality. As Nelson Goodman puts it: "Possible worlds of fiction lie within actual worlds. Fiction operates in actual worlds in much the same way as nonfiction." (1978: 104)

Scientific inquiry, far from being a collection of facts or even a problem-solving activity (as understood by philosophers at the beginning of the past century) is to a great extent an enterprise of applying concepts beyond immediate experience or experimenting with possibilities which exceed the threshold of the empirical, and that exist only within the confines of the imaginary.

According to Janet M. Soskice and Rom Harré: "Most sciences are (...) inclined to include assertions about those features of the world that are *beyond all possible experience*." (1995: 290; emphasis added) Indeed, describing modern science as a "play of possibilities" (*le jeu des possible*) molecular biologist François Jacob confirms the view spelled out by the philosophers of science, and says:

*Scientific advances often come from uncovering some previously unseen aspects of things, not so much as a result of using some new instrument, but rather of looking at objects from a new angle. This look is necessarily guided by a certain idea of how so called reality might be. (1982: 11; emphasis added)*

In other words, it is an *imaginary reality* to which the science advances rather than the one erected on the bedrock of hard facts. And that – says Jacob quoting Peter Medawar – always involves a certain representation of the unknown, that is, of what is beyond that we have logical or experimental reason to believe. Scientific investigation begins by inventing a possible world, or a small piece of a possible world (Jacob, 1982: 11-12; my emphasis).

In a sort of free paraphrase one could say that it is not the instrument alone and not measuring in the first place that can bring science a significant step toward progression but rather 'opening' of novel vistas which in its turn enables 'opening' of new worlds. And, as we are instructed: "For science, there are many possible worlds" (Jacob, 1982: 12)

A mode of opening up a possible world in literature and art, according to Paul Ricœur, is to be found in metaphor-usage. Ricœur is chiefly concerned with analysis of a literary text, and says:

*What has to be understood is what points toward a possible world thanks to the non-ostensive reference of the text. Texts speak of possible worlds and of possible ways of orienting oneself in those worlds. (1974: 106; emphasis added)*

In creating possible worlds of science, literature and art through the "play of possibilities" we are constantly initiating new "mutations of meaning"<sup>3</sup> that require radical leap of imagination capable of confronting even the impossible. However, experimenting with the impossible is fully legitimate and is present everywhere where there is a creative impulse to beat the canons of common-sense, habits of thought, and standards of convention, be it in the domain of science or art. Even the 'impossible' appears as a form of possibility<sup>4</sup>. The path to possible world often makes its way through all kinds of impossibilities, and that is a work of imagination. Thus, the "ruling out of impossible worlds is a serious liability in its own right. For semantics needs *impossible worlds*." (Lycan, 1990/91: 224; emphasis added). But impossibility (*das Unmögliche*) has an unstable status. Much or even most, of revolutionary scientific discoveries, and artistic innovations alike, have been labeled as revolutionary because they denoted the break with tradition in a drastic way and were all considered impossible to be true or aesthetically relevant. From the 'impossibility' that the Earth is spherical, or the 'impossibility' of displacing it from the centre of the solar system, to the newer paradoxes of quantum physics that are not in accord with what counts as scientifically possible, the history of science, and no less that of art too, is but a long report on the cases initially conceived as evidently 'false' that later proved not to be so.

The man of science and the man of art pass through the same process of maturation as the "metaphorical man" does, who realizes that at some time impossible metaphorical juxtaposition turns out to initiate new perspectives and so achieve a fresh cognitive shift. He too (for, after all, it is the same human being) realizes that what is at some time possible as a *fiction* can at some other time be acknowledged as a *fact*.

The parallelism between scientific and aesthetic world-views and shifts of metaphorical meaning speaks about the evolutionary process that they all undergo. As initial absurdity of a metaphor or oxymoron proves to be interpretable, so actual impossibility that the scientist or artist meet turns out to be fictionally possible, due to the power of imagination. And as today's vital metaphor is a candidate to be accepted tomorrow as 'dead' so can today's 'impossible' scientific, literary or artistic world become a future possible, and indeed actual, one.

## CONCLUDING REMARKS

Metaphor does not state what seems to be empirically evident, but uses cross-fertilization of disparate meanings in order to shape new perspectives and so outline what could be the case, even when it contradicts the known and the logical. It bridges the gap between the given and the projected, the evident and the probable, the conventional and the hypothetical – which all requires an engagement of imagination. Thus the difference between the literal and metaphorical use of language is not just the one between the straightforward and ambiguous, the plain and possible, but touches on a more profound relation between repetition and innovation, between imitation and creation, and also affirms imagination as a constitutive part of it.

<sup>3</sup> See Radman, 1995b.

<sup>4</sup> Here echo Goethe's words: "In der Idee leben hiesst, dass Unmögliches so behandeln als wenn es möglich wäre."

In metaphor we exercise imagination so that we can make things appear otherwise. Metaphor enables us to depart more radically from what is immediately present toward designing what is imaginatively possible. A leap from an initial indeterminacy to projected or fictional possibility of meaning represents a cognitive shift from initial puzzle to articulated pattern.

Strange enough, in the era when both the so-called hard sciences and mathematics have accepted in-determinacy, in-certainty, dis-continuity, imaginary and irreal numbers as their fundamental concepts, there is still scepticism and resistance toward recognition of analogous notions in philosophy of language and philosophy of art. It seems that there is an implicit fear that introduction of such negative terms would necessarily mean departure from certainty, lawfulness and consistency. Such fear is, however, unfounded for where there is indeterminacy in language and thought there is also flexibility, and with it there is increased variability, which is a precondition for new matching and new combinatory structuring, as well as fresh associative links. An apparent lack of certainty proved to be proved to be able to open up new possibilities of reading and interpretation, and in that sense also to create new imaginary alternatives for existing order of things.

In the process of metaphor-making (both in science and in art and literature) we mobilize the potentiality beyond the frontiers of "cool reason" that might prove to be cognitively relevant. In ignoring the logic, and in neglecting empirical evidence and truth we are not acting irrationally, and are not telling deliberate lies, but are first of all fighting stereotypes of convention and habits of thought in order to create new imaginary but meaningful spaces. This is a mode of achieving novel cognitive perspective on new and possible – and, yes, even the 'impossible' – worlds.

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## UNE APPROCHE ESTHÉTIQUE DE WALTER BENJAMIN À L'ŒUVRE DU PEINTRE SURREALISTE NIKOS EGONOPOULOS

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L'œuvre surréaliste de l'artiste grec est directement liée au contexte historique et socioculturel de la génération grecque de la période entre les deux guerres mondiales.

Le surréalisme en Grèce est présenté par les artistes issus de la bourgeoisie mais aussi de la haute bourgeoisie. Même si ces artistes se déclarent marxistes, ils gardent leur distance par rapport à la partie communiste grecque. D'ailleurs, le rôle du surréalisme en Grèce se restreint au domaine artistique, puisque les circonstances particulières des années trente (la dictature de Metaxas) n'ont pas favorisé son aspect politique<sup>1</sup>.

Pendant cette période le mouvement du surréalisme de l'ouest fut manifesté d'une part comme une révolution contre la tradition et l'idéologie prépondérante, et d'autre part comme un symptôme de l'impasse de cette époque – celle d'entre-deux-guerres – qui a vécu les conséquences de celle qui fut probablement la plus profonde des ruptures dans l'histoire politique et sociale occidentale.

Ce qui est le plus important est qu'à travers ce mouvement – pour la première fois dans l'histoire de l'art et des recherches concernant les arts plastiques – le hasard, le désir, l'inconscient et la transcription des procédures du rêve devinrent les éléments primordiaux de la création artistique<sup>2</sup>.

Le peintre et poète Nikos Egonopoulos – dont l'œuvre on analysera pendant cette présentation – étant influencé par le mouvement surréaliste et en particulier par le peintre italien De Chirico, il essaierait d'une part d'accentuer l'imaginaire, la sensualité et l'absurde et d'autre part de créer son propre style d'art, fondé sur des valeurs irrationnelles tout en utilisant les normes plastiques ou esthétiques de la tradition grecque, influencées par la Mythologie et l'art Byzantin.

Un deuxième point qu'on doit souligner est que son œuvre fut moins basé sur l'esprit de l'utopie européenne et plus sur la tradition grecque.

On devrait donc examiner à quel point l'artiste grec parvint à combiner le besoin de retour à la tradition grecque avec l'esprit iconoclaste et les positions révolutionnaires, idéologiques et théoriques du surréalisme.

À la fin, l'approche esthétique de Walter Benjamin à l'œuvre d'Egonopoulos nous aidera à découvrir s'il s'agit d'un peintre surréaliste qui, selon l'avis du philosophe, fait apparaître une conception radicale de liberté, et encore plus s'il s'agit d'un mouvement grec lié au caractère irrationnel et tragique qui marque l'aventure de l'utopie surréaliste.

L'approche que je viens de mentionner présente une grande difficulté parce que quand Walter Benjamin, dans son œuvre « *Euvres II* »<sup>3</sup>, se réfère au mouvement surréaliste, il souligne le fait que les surréalistes redonnent vie à une conception de la liberté absolument radicale. Il se réfère, bien évidemment au trajet artistique et idéologique du mouvement. D'un mouvement qui tente de mettre entièrement en question un héritage affaiblit par ses contradictions internes.

Il est évident que Benjamin se met d'accord avec le fait que la tradition n'est plus accessible, vue sa rupture avec le progrès, qui lui, il apporte tant d'espoir. Ce qui est, tout de même, consolant, est qu'il était convaincu de l'existence d'une vérité et d'une union classiques du monde.

Réciproquement, en ce qui concerne Egonopoulos, la tradition fonctionnait comme une source de renouvellement. La Mythologie grecque, dès le 20<sup>ème</sup> siècle, fit part de la vie de tous les jours et devint une incitation à la critique du statu quo de l'époque. Cela fonctionnerait comme un moyen de visionner irrationnellement l'avenir.

<sup>1</sup> Cf. Référence à Nikos Egonopoulos (1907 - 1985), dans les annales *Chartis*, no 25/26.

<sup>2</sup> Cf. Bréton André, *Genèse et perspective artistique du surréalisme*, ed : Gallimard, Paris, 1965,

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<sup>3</sup> Cf. Benjamin Walter, « Le surréalisme. Le dernier instant de l'intelligentsia européenne », *Euvres II*, ed : Gallimard, Paris, 2000, p : 113 – 134.

Et Ibid. : « Sur la peinture, ou signe et tache », *Euvres I*, ed : Gallimard, Paris, 2000, p : 172 – 178.



Poète et la muse, 1938



L'esprit de la solitude, 1939



Dedales, 1949

## A. L'articulation surréaliste de l'image

On verra maintenant si et à quel point l'artiste grec adopte les déterminants constituants prépondérants de l'image onirique en termes de surréalisme et s'il avance à un point de écriture automatique expérimentale.

C'est bien connu que l'écriture automatique fut utilisée comme moyen, aussi bien de délivrance psychique, que de culture du potentiel, inné de la personne au niveau création. D'ailleurs, les surréalistes occidentaux étaient dans l'embarras, ne sachant pas comment appliquer l'écriture automatique à la peinture et surtout à l'image, d'autant plus quand la peinture n'est pas exprimée à travers des formes absurdes mais de façon plutôt descriptive<sup>4</sup>.

Ainsi, aussi bien qu'au domaine de l'art plastique, l'expérience de l'automatisme de la pensée et du geste graphique pratiqué par les surréalistes a bouleversé les rapports que la tradition représentative avait établis, depuis la Renaissance, entre l'artiste et la société mais aussi entre l'artiste et sa propre création plagiant par des processus fort similaires à ceux qui se manifestent dans le rêve.

<sup>4</sup> Bréton, lui-même, en parle dans son œuvre *Le surréalisme et la peinture*, Paris, 1928.

## 1. EST-CE QUE L'ARTISTE GREC UTILISA L'ÉCRITURE AUTOMATIQUE DANS SON ŒUVRE ?

Je considère que les conceptions surréalistes les plus osées de l'artiste grec sont rencontrées approximativement entre 1938 et 1950, c'est-à-dire pendant sa précoce et première période surréaliste.

Dans ses œuvres de cette période, on constate une fabulation riche et inventive, enrichie d'un humour qui est caractéristiquement corrosif et ambigu. On constate également la coexistence des symboles et types de l'art byzantin à des emblèmes métaphysiques de De Chirico<sup>5</sup> ou bien à des éléments purement surréalistes.

Ces créations sont caractérisées d'une expression artistique plus libre, touchée par l'émotion des vécus multiples et encore frais, en provenance aussi bien du domaine de l'art et de la tradition grecs, que du domaine de l'avant-garde occidentale et surtout du surréalisme<sup>6</sup>.

<sup>5</sup> Le contenu mythologique de l'œuvre de De Chirico, pendant cette période, est une revitalisation de divers époques culturelles de l'Ouest (Antiquité, Moyen Age, Renaissance).

Cf. De Chirico G., *Mémoires*, ed : Editions de la Table Ronde, Paris, 1965, aussi, Courtion P., *Le rêve : Giorgio De Chirico, Panorama de la Peinture française contemporaine*, Paris, 1927.

<sup>6</sup> Notre source principale en ce qui concerne l'œuvre du peintre grec est le livre de Niki Loizidis, *Le surréalisme dans l'art grec moderne, Le cas de Nikos Egonoopoulos*, ed : Nefeli, Athènes, 1984.



Hermes en attente, 1939



La guerre civile, 1940



Argonautes, 1970

Un autre élément proéminent de ces créations est qu'Egonopoulos fonctionne des fois d'une articulation statique de l'image – clairement influencé de De Chirico et de l'art byzantin – et des fois il avance à un mouvement vif et agité des formes dans l'espace mais il garde presque toujours l'équilibre à l'aide d'un cadre scénographique austère.

L'œuvre « *Hora Ruit* », (1939), est par exemple un des rares œuvres qui donnent l'impression d'un espace «surréaliste» qui vibre des fictions oniriques et des projections hallucinatoires.

A *Hora Ruit*<sup>7</sup>, on peut constater :

- 1) L'interpénétration de l'espace intérieur et extérieur. Il s'agit d'une des déterminantes de la topographie emblématique des surréalistes et en particulier de De Chirico.
- 2) On peut également distinguer la formation du mélange de deux formes féminines et l'usage surréaliste de types symboliques de l'art byzantin.

<sup>7</sup> De même, le cours de l'élément marin dans la chambre aux meubles blancs, la forme surprise de la femme dont les mains poussent, comme des tentacules, les yeux "vigilants" qui ressortent de la crinière onduleuse, forment un espace agité qui semble être électrisé d'une envie de vigilance et d'un sentiment de panique.

- 3) L'inscription « A louer » fonctionne ici comme un signal autonome qui obéit, cependant, à l'esprit de la syntaxe libre et irrationnelle de l'image. Le peintre, à travers l'image de l'annonce locative, il tente de donner l'impression du collage.
- 4) Il serait utile d'ajouter que le cours corrosif du temps qui est ici symbolisé à l'aide de l'élément marin, est à l'opposé de la décoration élégante, surprenante et attrayante de la chambre.

À travers l'œuvre « *Dioscures* », Egonopoulos s'approche plus directement à la problématique de la notion de la «surprise», liée à l'œuvre de Magritte.

Les Dioscures apparaissent en portant l'un, un costume chic de promenade et l'autre un maillot de bains, en contradiction profane avec le chapeau noir, le monocle et la médaille.

La description rhétorique de l'œuvre surprend le spectateur.

Cependant, dans la plupart des cas, tandis que l'image s'articule à travers d'éléments idiomatiques ou purement surréalistes, l'expression, seule, ne peut pas être caractérisée purement surréaliste. Il est probable qu'Egonopoulos ne voulait pas que son œuvre soit étranger à l'espace grec comme une complète et aveugle application des principes du surréalisme international.

Il utilise pourtant des techniques connues dans l'espace des arts plastiques.

- a) La technique du collage, par exemple, est la technique qui correspond le plus et qui reflète le plus fidèlement le caractère hétéroclite et fragmenté du mythe moderne et de l'espace imaginaire contemporain. Des images et des éléments isolés de la réalité émanant de la civilisation technocratique et industrielle contemporaine – que la conscience de l'artiste lutte à cartographier – coexistent à des images et des fragments de mémoire du passé.

Selon Benjamin, comme nous l'explique dans son œuvre « *Sens Unique* »<sup>8</sup>, les mots, comme les facettes, sont des fragments, violemment arrachés de la réalité, qui en même temps conserve leur mémoire.

Le surréalisme a, en effet, identifié le collage à un véritable élément de «métaphysique» des rencontres imprévues et surprenantes. C'est-à-dire que cette technique a été utilisée comme un catalyseur des valeurs traditionnelles et du statu quo, comme c'est le cas dans les œuvres de René Magritte.

C'est un fait qu'Egonopoulos, refusant d'être en rupture avec la tradition, n'a pas assez expérimenté avec la technique du collage ou la lithographie puisque son écriture est plus symbolique qu'onirique et puisque l'espace et les formes ne sont pas soumis à des interventions violentes de dérèglement ou de déformation.

<sup>8</sup> Cf. Benjamin W., *Sens Unique précédé de l'enfance berlinoise*, trad. : Lacoste J., ed. : Les Lettres Nouvelles, Paris, 1978, p. : 147 – 243.



- b) Cependant dans les images d'Egonopoulos on distingue la technique du montage. Il s'agit de la coexistence des éléments hétéroclites, d'une frustration des objets de tous les jours ou du symbole poétique dans un espace qui n'est pas familier. Cela ne veut d'autant dire que cette conception soit appliquée à l'articulation violente et partielle de l'image.

Dans l'œuvre « *L'esprit de la solitude* », (1939) par exemple, l'articulation hétéroclite et irrationnelle de l'image au premier niveau (coexistence du salon bourgeois irrationnel avec la nature morte et l'inscription) est encadrée d'un décor paysagiste qui se trouve en accord avec les règles de la figuration traditionnelle.

Néanmoins, on ne constate ici ni les dérèglements violents de la perspective ni les artifices d'illusion, systématiquement utilisés par De Chirico et qui se retrouvent dans la plupart des œuvres d'Egonopoulos.

Dans l'œuvre « *Le phonographe au bord de la mer* », (1940), on constate le caractère mélancolique de l'image à travers la couleur du ciel noir et surtout à travers l'ombre du spectre qui se dresse derrière la femme nue qui a un poisson entre les mains. Dans son autre œuvre, « *La guerre Civile* », (1949), nous voyons deux femmes à moitié nues, encadrées d'un paysage industrialisé. L'artiste a créé ces œuvres à une période envahie de pressions au niveau psychologique.

Dans l'œuvre « *Hermès en attente* », (1939) d'Egonopoulos, qui est d'ailleurs très intéressante, l'artiste crée une alchimie attirante de formes et de symboles qui ont leurs origines dans l'emblématique mélancolique de De Chirico mais aussi dans la déclamation corrosive de Magritte.

Il est, pourtant, tout aussi difficile de parler d'une écriture onirique ou de l'usage subversif du code de la représentation « réaliste » que Magritte applique systématiquement dans ses œuvres.

Quelqu'un pourrait affirmer la même chose pour « *La synthèse* », (1964), - œuvre de la période mature d'Egonopoulos - qui attire l'attention du spectateur à l'aide de son utilisation agile mais aussi énigmatique des symboles.

- c) On constate aussi que la confrontation – pleine d'insinuations symboliques – de l'archaïque aux « mannequins » contemporains, placée dans le cadre d'un décor avec un rideau lourd, semi fermé, révèle une approche byzantine du paysage avec un temple antique. La colonne antique qui se trouve à côté d'un mannequin portant un casque et la vieille lampe qui se trouve en premier niveau, fixent la dimension poétique du « dépaysement » des objets dans un espace mystérieux et non déterminé. Cet espace fonctionne en tant que caméra obscure, à travers la quelle se dressent les mannequins, des symboles d'une ère et des périodes culturelles du passé.

On peut constater que l'articulation statique de l'image, sa fonction symbolique – méticuleusement étudiée – l'articulation pure et non troublée de l'espace, ont tous comme résultat la formation d'une écriture qui s'éloigne constamment de l'aventure de l'automatisme psychique. D'ailleurs, pendant cette période-là des années 60, cela ne se produit pas qu'à l'œuvre d'Egonopoulos.

## 2. LA FORME HUMAINE DANS L'ŒUVRE D'EGONPOULOS

La forme du mannequin apparaît dans la peinture d'Egonopoulos comme un alliage d'influences de la littérature et du théâtre d'avant-garde mais aussi de la métaphysique de De Chirico. Elle n'est pourtant pas exprimée d'une façon extrême, catalytique ou eschatologique. Les premières formes de mannequins d'Egonopoulos ont un creux énigmatique au visage et restent debout à côté des trappes ouvertes qui donnent l'impression d'endroits menaçants.

L'œuvre « *Le poète et la Muse* », (1938) est l'œuvre d'Egonopoulos qui présente, du moins morphologiquement, beaucoup d'éléments communs aux œuvres strictement géométriques de la peinture métaphysique et surtout de celle de la période des mannequins de De Chirico (p.ex. : « *Le Prophète* », 1915).

- a) Les formes mentionnées ci-dessus sont influencées de l'art plastique grec byzantin et archaïque. Elles sont tout à fait muettes et sans les caractéristiques d'un visage, elles rappellent la formation des Kouros et des saints byzantins à des positions en face.
- b) D'ailleurs, la formation habituelle des mannequins d'Egonopoulos, rapportant à des statues, présente plein de caractéristiques communes au développement plastique des formes de la dite « période romaine » de De Chirico. Il s'agit d'une période de retour aux racines, à la vision aussi bien de la Grèce antique que de Rome antique, qui s'effectue après l'aménagement de l'artiste italien à Rome en 1918.

Malgré cela, « le mannequin métaphysique » de De Chirico fut adopté des mouvements suivants qui recherchaient un symbole contemporain de révolution contre la civilisation technocratique et les idéaux du statu quo. D'ailleurs, on doit souligner le fait que les formes d'Egonopoulos subissent des influences flagrantes de surréalistes. Ces influences ne se repèrent pas seulement au caractère imaginatif et irrationnel de ses conceptions excentriques (des figures zoomorphes, des corps acéphales avec des pots des fleurs, des bouquets ou bien des masques à la place du visage), mais aussi à l'atmosphère fort érotique qui y règne (par exemple son œuvre « *Hermès en attente* »). Le moyen de représentation du sexe est assez caractéristique. Il s'éloigne de la nature androgyne idéale du mannequin métaphysique de De Chirico.

D'autant plus que l'apparition provocante de la forme féminine, surtout dans les œuvres surréalistes tardifs de ces derniers vingt ans, constitue un écho de la révolution surréaliste qui utilisa l'érotisme comme un élément catalytique mais aussi comme un outil d'attaque contre les contrats sociaux et les préjugés bourgeois. Son œuvre « *Dioni* », (1949), constitue un hymne surréaliste à la beauté féminine.

Les seins du mannequin sont la partie qui attire le plus d'attention, tandis que sa tête a la forme d'un pion. Le mannequin, en lui-même, constitue probablement une référence péjorative aux mœurs contemporaines. Il paraît d'incarner le mythe – aussi bien ancien que moderne – de la femme-amazone, avec un humour, on dirait plutôt corrosif. On peut ajouter aussi quelques autres

œuvres dévoués aux femmes : « La muse méditerranéenne », (1957), « A la plage », (1976) et « Iro et Léandros », (1981).

On peut remarquer que dans l'œuvre d'Egonopoulos la femme apparaît comme une présence énigmatique mais en même temps fort sensuelle.

Au surréalisme, en général, les transformations de la forme féminine «insultante» sont assez nombreuses. La femme-automate, sans les distinctifs de son sexe, apparaît souvent dans l'œuvre de De Chirico, de Max Ray, de Max Ernst etc.

Comme le cite Benjamin dans « *Le triomphe de l'allégorie* » : « la femme chez Baudelaire est le butin le plus précieux, dans le « triomphe de l'allégorie ». » La vie qui signifie la mort?

Au contraire, les origines esthétiques et mythiques de la femme-»hybride« chez Egonopoulos, sont en relation directe avec les déesses, les nymphes, la Vierge au Byzance mais aussi avec la femme-hétaire, symbole de la provocation sociale à caractère catalytique et irrésistible des surréalistes.

### 3. LA FONCTION SYMBOLIQUE DE L'OBJET DANS L'ŒUVRE D'EGONOPoulos

La philosophie de l'art de Walter Benjamin exprime surtout une sensibilité exacerbée aux contradictions de la modernité qui n'est pas étrangère à notre époque. Il aperçoit ces contradictions à travers le contact avec les « choses » et les événements les plus banals de la vie de tous les jours (par exemple : une flânerie dans les rues de Berlin ou de Florence ou même les noms des rues, etc.). Il parle du monde des objets qui entoure l'homme et qui prend de plus en plus des expressions implacables de la marchandise. Il pense à une politisation de l'art. Ses analyses sont des immersions qui visent à instaurer une sorte d'intimité, de sympathie avec l'objet<sup>9</sup>.

En ce qui concerne Egonopoulos, on pourrait dire que la fonction symbolique de l'objet est étroitement liée à la problématique de De Chirico tout en conservant suffisamment d'éléments du domaine de surréalisme.

L'artiste grec ne paraît pas se complaire au jeu avec le hasard mais il cherche des résultats intelligibles à travers la culture consciente de l'esprit de l'absurde. Les anneaux qui remplacent la tête de la femme dans l'œuvre « *Statue crépit d'une manière livide* », ou le pot des fleurs qui couronnent la forme féminine imposante dans l'œuvre « *Hermès en attente* », (1939) constituent des trouvailles qui s'approchent beaucoup à l'esprit de Magritte.

De même, la forme de monstre du complexe de l'homme et du cheval dans l'œuvre « *L'amat de Lady Chatterlay* » ou dans « *Plus ou romantique* » est un caractéristique du secteur surréaliste de l'imaginaire qu'on retrouve dans l'œuvre de Ernst ou de Dali. Nous pouvons donner comme exemple l'œuvre de Marx Ernst « *Une semaine de bonté* », (1934)<sup>11</sup>.

Dans l'œuvre d'Egonopoulos nous remarquons :

- a) Le dépaysement de l'objet de tous les jours dans un espace qui paraît déplacé – comme par exemple la présence d'un moule du café en pleine campagne – constitue un caractéristique de l'écriture de De Chirico et des surréalistes mais qu'on retrouve en même temps chez Egonopoulos. Certains objets symboliques qu'on retrouve dans les œuvres d'Egonopoulos se réfèrent à l'esprit de la tradition grecque.
- b) L'utilisation montage. Le surréalisme fut le premier mouvement à découvrir la force révolutionnaire émanant de « l'ancien », à travers des objets dont l'éclat se fane petit à petit, ou des objets qui ne sont plus à la mode. Paris fut pour les surréalistes le centre d'un monde de ces objets. À l'aide de telles corrélations, les rues, les places et les arcs de la ville nous incitent d'y penser d'une manière complètement différente quand on songe aux événements auxquels nous déferent. La force révélatrice du montage que Benjamin reconnaît à ces corrélations, est adoptée comme moyen de reconnaissance de la ville. Pourtant, Egonopoulos n'utilise que très peu la logique du montage, contrairement à d'autres méthodes qui donnent l'opportunité pour une autre reconnaissance. Il utilisa la coexistence des espaces intérieurs et extérieurs.

### 4. DIALECTIQUE DE L'IMAGE (INTÉRIEUR – EXTÉRIEUR).

Dans son œuvre « *Le poète et la Muse* », (1938), les formes se trouvent dans un décor ouvert, isolé du reste du monde.

De tous les objets stéréométriques qui se trouvent sur le sol, ce qui nous attire le plus l'attention est un rectangulaire. Sur l'une de ses côtés, on distingue la peinture d'une partie d'une cours ou d'un intérieur à des conques et dont le sol a la forme d'un échiquier élevé en perspective.

Il s'agit d'un artifice de l'espace illusionniste qui est déjà connu des fresques romaines du 1<sup>er</sup> siècle A.C. Cet artifice illusionniste de « la peinture à l'intérieur de la peinture » constitue la thématique fondamentale de la « *Métaphysique des intérieurs* », (1915 - 1917) de De Chirico. Plus tard, cela passe aux surréalistes comme un élément fondamental de la formation et de l'articulation de l'espace onirique.

Pour De Chirico, « la peinture à l'intérieur de la peinture » prend un sens plus symbolique – métaphysique, en dénotant la nature illusionniste des phénomènes du monde intérieur, tandis que pour les surréalistes, cette question illusionniste prend un caractère plutôt idéologique et social.

En ce qui concerne Egonopoulos, on constate que dans son œuvre « *Le poète et la Muse* », il tente une confrontation du décor métaphysique – illusionniste avec la réalité du « monde extérieur » qui y est représentée d'une maison néo-classique, du couleur bleu de la mer et du couple des vacanciers.

En plus, dans son œuvre « *L'esprit de la solitude* », (1939), Egonopoulos adopte avec succès certains des déterminants de l'image surréaliste. Plus particulièrement, il tente une coexistence d'espaces intérieurs et extérieurs.

<sup>9</sup> Cf. Benjamin W., « Zentral Park » (14), *Revue d'Esthétique*, numéro spéciale, No 1, 1981, p. 16.

<sup>10</sup> Cf. Benjamin W., « Paysages Urbains », *Sens Unique*, op. cit. p. 245 – 302.

<sup>11</sup> Voir aussi l'œuvre de Marx Ernst « Au-delà de la peinture », *Cahiers d'Arts*, Paris, 1936.

## B. Reviviscence de la Mythologie Grecque dans l'œuvre d'Egonopoulos

Le surréalisme continuait librement son cours jusqu'au noyau originare des mythes<sup>12</sup>. Au 20<sup>ème</sup> siècle la mythologie grecque s'implique à la vie de tous les jours contemporaine ; elle devient une stimulation pour la critique du statu quo ; elle se transforme en un revêtement merveilleux aux slogans sociaux les plus abatants ; elle fonctionne comme un moyen de vision irrationnelle de l'avenir.

Le mythe du labyrinthe n'a pas laissé Egonopoulos indifférent, qui a dessiné « *Dédales* » en 1949, reconstituant ainsi l'Homo Faber. En 1960, nous avons son œuvre « *Thésée et Minotaure* ».

En Grèce, l'antiquité grecque et ses mythes inspirent Parthenis, Gounaropoulos, Tsarouhis et tant d'autres artistes de la génération de la période d'entre-deux-guerres.

Egonopoulos est celui qui forme, comme on en a déjà parlé, une nouvelle mythologie.

Beaucoup d'œuvres d'Egonopoulos sont dominées par la personnalité polymorphe et pittoresque du dieu Hermès. La personnalité de ce dieu a aussi attiré l'attention de De Chirico, surtout à cause de ses qualités d'agitateur de rêves et de dormeur.

Le rêve, ainsi que la situation catatonique semi-consciente qui incite les expressions de l'âme les plus lucides et mystiques, inspire aux autres surréalistes la création artistique la plus authentique.

Toutefois, l'Hermès d'Egonopoulos est une forme ambiguë qui contracte toutes les qualités du dieu archaïque, de manière charmante et parodique.

Dans l'œuvre « *Hermès en attente* », le dieu, une épée dans la main, à moitié nu mais en portant un chapeau de bourgeois européen, a l'air pensif tout en attendant les signes des temps. Tandis qu'au premier niveau de l'œuvre, deux musées surréalistes à l'air inquiet, l'une archaïque et l'autre portant une toilette de l'époque, montrent l'une à l'autre d'un geste hiératique de la main et de l'index. Ce geste nous rappelle fortement les icônes byzantines.

Dans cet œuvre d'Egonopoulos, l'impression de l'énigme et de l'inquiétude qui provoque « l'attente » pensive et non déterminée du dieu, s'équilibre et elle est partiellement affaiblie à travers l'envie couvée de l'humour « sacrilège » et catalytique. Cela est au bénéfice de la fonction poétique et plastique de l'image. Voir aussi son œuvre « *Hermès et le poète* », (1957).

Nous avons par la suite des couples qui représentent le dévouement conjugal ainsi que les rencontres des dieux

ou des héros avec des nymphes (« *Hector et Andromaque* », 1969).

Ce caractère ambigu des « mythographies » d'Egonopoulos – qui est en même temps pieux et catalytique, nostalgique et péjoratif – constitue plutôt une caractéristique de la pensée sur les mythes formée, du début du 20<sup>ème</sup> siècle.

L'espace scénique présente une légère déformation perspective, tandis que, par terre, aussi bien à gauche qu'à droite, les symboles anciens et modernes du « mythe » qui encadre « l'action » des héros, y sont placés. Bien évidemment, le mythe, le décor et les formes des héros ont subi multiples déformations et dépaysements dans l'espace et le temps.

### 1. RETOUR AUX RACINES

Ulysse en tant que symbole du retour au pays, de l'aventure et du retour aux racines, inspira à Egonopoulos une série d'œuvres.

Dans l'œuvre « *Le retour d'Ulysse* », (1947), l'héros légendaire célèbre le retour en jouant au violon tandis qu'un oiseau chante assis sur sa tête. L'oiseau est symbole des événements joyeux et de l'euphorie érotique.

En même temps, le retour aux racines, c'est-à-dire à Ithaque, de l'Ulysse surréaliste constitue, lui aussi, un dépaysement multiple dans le temps et l'espace, puisque le drapeau grec à la fenêtre, en tant que décor de l'intérieur, constitue un amalgame hétéroclite d'éléments sociaux qui sont encadrés au niveau de la profondeur de l'image, d'une plage et des ruines d'un temple antique.

Le retour aux racines constitue un message culturel, étroitement lié au « mythe de la grécité » qui est passé dans l'œuvre d'Egonopoulos, non seulement à travers les reviviscences de la mythologie, mais aussi à travers les réformes surréalistes des paraboles bibliques et les légendes et événements de l'histoire moderne.

On doit souligner le fait que l'espace surréaliste dans l'œuvre d'Egonopoulos ne coïncide pas entièrement avec l'espace onirique surréaliste. Il n'y a aucun doute qu'il préserve des origines en provenance de surréalisme et surtout de la topographie surréaliste-scénique de De Chirico. Le modèle psychologique d'iconographie de l'artiste grec, est la vaste topographie mnémonique des œuvres de la période métaphysique. Par exemple son œuvre « *Alexandre et Bucéphale* », (1971) : dans le décor de la plage avec le temple antique qui est plus proche morphologiquement aux modèles byzantins, on constate une connexion avec la période de jeunesse d'Alexandre le Grand.

Il ne faut pas omettre le fait que la vision de la « ville oubliée » qui conserve des mémoires inexpugnables de la Grèce antique et du Byzance, tient une place très importante dans l'esprit et l'âme du poète et peintre N. Egonopoulos.

Il s'agit de la réminiscence nostalgique de la grandeur du passé : ce crève-cœur inavoué du réfugié déraciné.

<sup>12</sup> De Chirico, et par la suite les surréalistes et peut être partiellement Egonopoulos, redonnent vie aux mythes grecs à travers les influences directes et indirectes de la pensée de deux des plus grands fondateurs de la pensée moderne occidentale : Nietzsche et Freud.

Il s'agit également d'une nostalgie du passé et d'un visionnement de l'avenir, encouragés tout d'abord par les décors de la période métaphysique de De Chirico. Des éléments qui «hébergeront» par la suite les plans inspirés et les projections fantasmagoriques de l'utopie surréaliste.

Il s'agit finalement de la topographie onirique chez la plupart des artistes surréalistes. Rappelons-nous des errances mélancoliques de Tanguy dans le monde des archétypes les plus éloignés dans la sphère de la mémoire.

## 2. COMMENT EST-CE QUE L'IMAGINAIRE EST-IL EXPRIMÉ DANS L'ŒUVRE D'EGONPOULOS ?

En ce qui concerne l'expression imagée d'Egonopoulos, la tentative de créer un art fondé sur des valeurs irrationnelles, se heurte à la difficulté d'associer celles-ci aux normes plastiques ou esthétiques de la tradition grecque.

La notion de l'imaginaire s'ouvre à un jeu des rapports contrastés entre, d'une part l'irrationnel et l'imprévu, et d'autre part la solidité de certains principes traditionnels qu'il essaie de maintenir.

C'est pour cette raison que dans l'œuvre surréaliste de l'artiste grec, le dérèglement des normes traditionnelles s'effectue, non pas à travers une syntaxe purement onirique, mais par le biais d'une ordonnance souvent statique et maîtrisée, qui n'est pas sans rappeler certains caractéristiques de l'art byzantin.

Benjamin, au contraire, se réfère à l'imaginaire surréaliste qui a construit une scène suspendue dans le vide, c'est-à-dire un décor théâtral illustré d'architecture et d'ombres fantomatiques ; un décor de Théâtre de l'Ambigu prêt à recevoir les acteurs du drame de la modernité contemporaine. Il nous dit : « Si c'est la fantaisie qui offre au souvenir les correspondances, c'est la pensée qui lui dédie les allégories. Le souvenir fait se rencontrer les deux. »<sup>13</sup>.

En fait, Benjamin croit à la possibilité de montrer que les œuvres sont des condensations d'expériences passées, capables d'éclairer l'avenir si l'on parvient à déchiffrer leur signification symbolique et allégorique.

Benjamin, dans son étude pour le *Trauerspiel* affirme que l'allégorie baroque fut le moyen de perception qui convient à une époque de bouleversement social et de guerre prolongée, dès que la souffrance humaine et le délabrement matériel furent l'essentiel de l'expérience historique. D'où émane le retour de l'allégorie – à son époque – comme une réponse à la destructivité effroyable de la 1<sup>ère</sup> guerre mondiale<sup>14</sup>.

Il s'agit des figures païennes qui avaient survécu au baroque. C'étaient des objets tellement éloignés de leur sens originel qu'ils sont devenus des points allégoriques des mémoires mélancoliques du poète.

Benjamin dit que « L'allégorie s'attache aux ruines. Elle offre l'image de l'agitation figée. »<sup>15</sup>.

## 3. EST-CE DONC POSSIBLE QUE L'ALLÉGORIE PUISSE MOBILISER OU MÊME RÉVEILLER LES MÉMOIRES DANS L'ŒUVRE D'EGONPOULOS ?

Ce n'est pas facile de répondre à cette question, mais ce qu'on peut dire est que la songerie mnémonique d'Egonopoulos est diachronique mais pas anhistorique. Il conçoit l'histoire – même dans ses œuvres statiques – comme une action de mythes et d'héros «sur scène», encadrée des symboles hétéroclites et des fétiches culturels, tout en visant au retour aux racines.

Walter Benjamin, au contraire, repêche – avec la manie d'un vrai collectionneur – des restes du passé de la ville qui ont perdu leur éclat, tout en sombrant dans l'obscurité. Il est bien conscient du fait que ne s'agit pas des signes – tâches qui amèneront à une reconstruction du passé.

Je vais finir cette présentation avec quelques mots de Walter Benjamin :

« Il est fort probable qu'à travers la citation des trouvailles, la connaissance apocalyptique qui sera née, éclairera le passé et le présent et donnera un sens au moment actuel. »

<sup>13</sup> Cf. Benjamin W., « Zentral Park » (17), *Revue d'Esthétique*, numéro spéciale, No 1, 1981, p. 18.

<sup>14</sup> Cf. Benjamin W., *Origines du drame baroque allemande*, ed : Flammarion, Paris, 1984.

<sup>15</sup> Cf. Benjamin W., « Zentral Park » (13), *Revue d'Esthétique*, numéro spéciale, No 1, 1981, p. 15.

## PERFORMING REPRESENTATION: FROM COURBET TO CÉZANNE<sup>1</sup>

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A hallmark of Modernist painting has always been its display of process, to the point where Jackson Pollock was called an "action painter." It was as if the performance of the bodily gestures of making art were the content of art itself, with the traces of the performance bearing indexical witness to it on the canvas. Modernist theory, exemplified by Clement Greenberg, read such concerns back into the art of the first avant-garde, from Gustave Courbet to Paul Cézanne, taking them to embody a purification meant to cure art of its domination by subject matter. In the past thirty or more years, however, art historical scholarship has rehabilitated the importance of subject matter in Realist and Impressionist painting. What has not yet been done convincingly is to theorize and historicize the relationship between that highly diverse subject matter and the avant-garde's process-oriented style.

Modernist theory de-emphasizes the specifics of subject matter in favor of universals such as freedom and individuality—the drive of artists to free themselves from traditional conformist teachings and to express their feelings or unique visions. This theory has little to do with subject matter except to make it another aspect of freedom of choice. Themes taken from the contemporary world were simply the antidote to the classical mythology and historical emphasis imposed by the Academy. Taking his cue from Charles Baudelaire, Walter Benjamin pointed out that with the increasing technical ability to represent reality accurately, as in photography, artists would feel forced to distinguish their work from it as well as from each other by imprinting it with marks of individuality. Emile Zola's definition of art as "a corner of nature seen through a temperament," exemplified this idea, and Zola was a leader in downplaying subject matter in favor of discovering "the man" behind the painting as its true content. In this theory, the artist's display of process is a performance of the self, the latter understood as a transcendental value.

Yet Zola also hinted at a historicizing factor when, in the late 1860s he repeatedly referred to artists as "workers." Indeed, the relationship between art and labor became a prime area of discussion for the first critics of Impressionism. For Louis Leroy, the satirical

critic who coined the term "impressionism," the craft of Impressionist painting was shoddy, lacking in seriousness. For Armand Silvestre, a well-known writer on the arts, the Impressionist style was a "clumsy ... worker-like manner." Silvestre was well aware of the pre-history of Impressionism in the work of the recently exiled Realist painter Courbet, with whom many associated the Impressionists. In his *Stonebreakers* (1849), Courbet was the first to represent workers in a style that echoed the physical efforts of its protagonists. Shortly thereafter, his landscapes made spectacular display of his technical gifts, while at the same time effectively conveying the materiality of the world he represented. Through his relationship with the anarchist philosopher Pierre-Joseph Proudhon, Courbet accepted the notion of art as the highest form of labor, and he became known as a "worker-painter."

Labor, of course, is an activity performed over time. Representing labor raises the question of how visual art, which for reasons of verisimilitude is limited to a moment in time, can represent labor performed over time. Must it always be through subject-matter, such as Courbet's workers? How does the artist represent his or her labor? And what is the nature of the artist's labor in the first place?

I will propose that the avant-garde style of Realist and Impressionist painting is a *performance* of representation. Representation, uncontaminated by narrative composition, is the *labor* of the naturalist artist; it is at the heart of the enterprise of artists committed to images of their own world. The philosophy of Arthur Schopenhauer suggests a relationship between representation and the world through Will. Reality for Schopenhauer, is perception processed by the Will as interpretive intelligence, as instrumental reason; it is an ever variable *process* rather than a static object. Representation is the work performed by the mind to produce what it calls reality. Although Schopenhauer wrote long before Emile Zola, he became popular in France in the 1870s. His theory seems like a dialectical restatement of Zola's definition of art, but one that emphasizes the individual and creative activity of mind as an element of reality itself. If that is the case, then artists who leave traces of their representational process on their imagery are in fact performing both the willful self and reality at once. Early avant-garde painting is a performance of such a dialectic, in which perception and interpretation are merged in the hand of the artist. It thus merits the claim made by Pierre-Joseph Proudhon that it is the noblest form of labor.

<sup>1</sup> This paper outlines a new book project I expect to bear the same title. I would like to thank Catherine Soussloff for the opportunity to present this paper at the Third Conference of the Mediterranean Society of Aesthetics in September, 2006.

The final, and most original, aspect of my argument will be to historicize such performances by linking them to the values of nineteenth-century modernity (as differentiated from Modernism). Baudelaire recognized that the essence of modernity was change, even while he feared the rise of industry. Others celebrated change as driven by technological innovation and productivity. How artists responded to this historical situation may perhaps be exemplified in a statement by a friend of the young Cézanne and Zola: "Let us wish only one thing, to produce. With production, success is certain ..." Forces and ideologies similar to those driving modernity drove the performances of artists, too.

The rest of this paper gives examples and is necessarily abbreviated. It is based on my own work, both published and unpublished. Gustave Courbet, for example, admired the example of musical performers. Friends of his were musicians, both professional, as in the case of Alphonse Promayet, and amateur, such as the novelist Champfleury, who was a great admirer of Haydn, Mozart and Beethoven. Courbet even represented himself as a cellist in the self-portrait *Man with Violoncello*, though there is no other evidence that he actually played an instrument. The appeal of music to Romantic thinkers was that it communicates directly to the senses on an abstract level, without the use of words. It leaves everything to imagination. Baudelaire's take on Wagner was that the German composer's compositions were expressions nature itself. Of course, in Delacroix's comparisons between the several arts, he gave the advantage to painting. For painting could not only communicate abstractly through color and line, at the same time it could represent the specific objects of nature materially. The similarity between the musician and the artist can be understood if one posits that both are giving representation to what one might call a text. The difference lies in the nature of that text. A musician performs a series of notes put down by a composer. The composer and his text are an intermediary between the object of interpretation, such as nature or feeling, and the performer. Visual art eliminates the intermediary. Through his representation, the artist may be said to attain the august role of performing nature itself.

The musician-performer most commonly compared to Delacroix is Hector Berlioz. Courbet made an un-commissioned portrait of Berlioz that he included among the paintings he showed at the Salon of 1850-51. His main exhibits were *The Stonebreakers*, *A Burial at Ornans*, and *Peasants Returning from Flagey*, accompanied by five other paintings, which included landscapes and portraits. This exhibition was the first in which Courbet was entirely free to show whatever he wanted. He was allowed to bypass the jury thanks to the prize he won in the previous exhibition, which was held under the left-wing Second Republic. His exhibit as a whole was understood at the time, as it is now, to harbor a radical political message. Each painting had something of a personal and political statement, and the rarely studied portrait of Berlioz was no exception.

Courbet was attracted to Berlioz for three reasons. First, Berlioz had acquired much fame not only as a composer, but as a performer and orchestra conductor. Second, Berlioz displayed an independent, entrepreneurial spirit Courbet shared. Berlioz had organized a philharmonic society and orchestra in opposition to those supported by the state, thus paralleling the anti-state monopoly position Courbet hoped to establish through the entrepreneurial pursuit of his painting. Third, Berlioz was the man of music most associated with avant-garde politics, thanks to his direct association with the Saint-Simonians, who believed that artists, along with industrialists and scientists, would be the leaders of the

new society. Surely, Courbet's position at the center of his famous *Studio of the Painter*, is related to these ambitions. The political dimension to such a position was clear to Courbet, encouraged by his friend Proudhon, who believed that representing nature truthfully, without the support of idealization, would free men to see for themselves. Courbet's artistic freedom, as expressed by performances that left the imprint of his artistic originality for all to see, exemplified the freedom of everyman, who in seeing the world truthfully would be liberated from delusion and ideology and thus able to shape his own destiny, much as the politically conscious composer-performer-entrepreneur Berlioz had done.

Emile Zola's best known view about Courbet's friend Proudhon was his attack on Proudhon's definition of art as a vehicle for social and political reform. For Zola, art had nothing utilitarian about it; to use it as propaganda debased its aesthetic essence. It was indeed in response to Proudhon that Zola offered his own definition of art as "a corner of nature seen through a temperament." Yet in an essay in which Zola praised Courbet as a "worker-painter," thus employing a term directly associated with Courbet's Proudhon-inflected beliefs, Zola at the same time referred to the young impressionists as honest workers. Such words echoed the utopian socialist, anarchist terminology associated primarily with Proudhon. Zola's argument with Proudhon was about art, not politics.

The artists to whom Zola was referring in his articles of the late 1860s included not just Edouard Manet, but the as yet unknown impressionists, Camille Pissarro, Claude Monet and Paul Cézanne, among others. At the same time as he praised these artists for their labors, Zola supported their depiction of modern subject matter. In his famous defense of Manet, he wrote:

*The wind is blowing in the direction of science; we are propelled in spite of ourselves towards the exact study of things and facts. Thus, every strong personality who reveals himself does so in the direction of truth. The movement of our time is certainly realist, or rather, positivist. I am therefore forced to admire men who seem related to one another, related by the time in which they are living.*<sup>2</sup>

Zola called the young Impressionists "Actualists" when he saw their works at the Salon of 1868, and he asserted that "I need not plead the cause of modern subjects here. It has been won for a long time."<sup>3</sup> He also noted Monet's preference for steamboats and enthusiastically described the noise and smoke his painting evoked.<sup>4</sup>

It was indeed at this time, in the late 1860s, that Monet, Pissarro, Cézanne, and Armand Guillaumin in particular took an interest in overtly industrial subject matter. They seem to have been responding not only to Zola's support but to the general call

<sup>2</sup> "Le vent est à la science; nous sommes poussés malgré nous vers l'étude exacte des faits et des choses. Ainsi, toutes les fortes individualités qui se révèlent, s'affirment-elles dans le sens de la vérité. Le mouvement de l'époque est certainement réaliste, ou plutôt positiviste. Je suis donc forcé d'admirer des hommes qui paraissent avoir quelque parenté entre eux, la parenté de l'heure à laquelle ils vivent." Zola, "Les Réalistes du Salon," *L'Événement*, 11 May 1866, in *Mon Salon* (1866), *Oeuvres complètes*, Henri Mitterand ed., Paris, 1969, v. 12, p. 807.

<sup>3</sup> "Je n'ai pas à plaider ici la cause des sujets modernes. Cette cause est gagnée depuis longtemps." (Emile Zola, "Les Actualistes," *L'Événement illustré*, 24 May 1868, in *Mon Salon* (1868), *Oeuvres complètes*, op. cit., p. 870 and ff.)

<sup>4</sup> "Il y a en lui [Monet] un peintre de marines de premier ordre. Mais il entend le genre à sa façon, et là encore je retrouve son profond amour pour les réalités présentes. On aperçoit toujours dans ses marines un bout de jetée, un coin de quai, quelque chose qui indique une date et un lieu. Il paraît avoir un faible pour les bateaux à vapeur.... Ce qui me frappe dans cette toile, c'est la franchise, la rudesse même de la touche. L'eau est acre, l'horizon s'étend avec appétit;... nous entendons la voix sourde et haletante de vapeur, qui emplit l'air de sa fumée nauséabonde. J'ai vu ces ton crus, j'ai respiré ces senteurs salées." (Ibid., p. 871.)

for modern subject matter by another supporter of both Courbet's Realism and his politics, Jules-Antoine Castagnary. As early as 1863, the year of the Salon des Refusés, Castagnary sweepingly declared:

*The goal of painting is to express the society that has produced it. ... Every epoch is known solely by the events that occur in it: political events, literary events, scientific events, industrial events, artistic events, each of which is marked by its particular character distinguishing it from the previous epoch and the one that will follow. ...*

Similar statements can be found in other writings of his during the 1860s. Of course, there was a political element to his position, for his inclusive aesthetic was a celebration of French economic progress, which Castagnary identified with the democratic impulse he believed was the true nature of French society. In the 1860s, a republican movement was gaining strength within the autocratic Second Empire. Not only did reform seem necessary, it seemed possible. The same was true in artistic circles, where, following the Salon des Refusés of 1863, the government had liberalized the Salon's judging process. Its success is witnessed by the inclusion of a number of early impressionist works in the Salons of the late 1860s, for example, in 1868, where Zola commented on them.

In my book currently in press at University of California, I argue that there is a connection between the performance of productive processes in works by the Impressionists, visible especially in works celebrating industry, and the forces driving modernity.<sup>6</sup> In just one example of a commentary on how industrial production exemplified the interaction of man and nature, I cite Julien Turgan's encyclopedic *Grandes Usines de France*, which began in 1860 and reached 20 volumes by 1895. Turgan's short preface is a strange mixture of evolutionary theory and pride. He claimed that since humanity was the last species to develop on Earth, it seemed as if all other strategies of survival had been attributed to animals. Man was forced to adapt through intelligence. Industry was the result of the struggle between man and nature:

*Led by study and inclination to the spectacle of the human battle [for survival], [the author] attentively examines those fortresses that man has erected against his original misery, those vast factories where the skillful direction of the chief, the activity of the foreman and the courageous toil of the worker combine to produce the marvels of our civilization.<sup>7</sup>*

Impressionism's disconcerting innovation was to disconnect the work ethic in art from the tidy, smooth, labored performances of academic art, substituting the free, innovative and, in their independent exhibition strategy, entrepreneurial spirit of the modern economy. Paralleling images of modernity with a display of forces of pictorial creativity, Claude Monet's Gare Saint-Lazare series is perhaps the most perfect embodiment of the ideology of modernity.

Yet the majority of Monet's paintings are representations of leisure and the enjoyment of nature. Still, I argue that even those paintings perform the values of modernity by foregrounding Monet's productive processes. In some sense, then, they are a reminder that leisure was the fruit of a modern economy driven by productivity.

How the ideology of modernity turned into modernism may best be discovered in the painting of Paul Cézanne. For Cézanne, the freedom obtained through the financial success of his father's entrepreneurial enterprise, namely the local bank, afforded him the leisure to enter a protracted dialogue with nature uninflected by the need to sell works to support his family. For lack of time, I will focus on only one motif in Cézanne's work: the village of L'Estaque, adjacent to Marseilles. One may follow the development of Cézanne's landscape through his three extended stays in the village, first in the early 1870s in order to escape both military service and the surveillance of his father over the son's clandestine new family, second in the later 1870s, then in the mid 1880s. L'Estaque was rapidly industrializing. The main railroad line from the North pierced the gray stone mountainside via the Tunnel de la Nerthe and traversed the village on its way to Marseilles. L'Estaque had been a center of brick and tile manufacture, but in the early 1880s, the Rio-Tinto Company established it as a major chemical producing town. In combination with the expanding tourist industry, the effect was to double L'Estaque's population from 1874 to 1880.<sup>8</sup>

Virtually all of Cézanne's landscapes until the end of the 1880s are of places inhabited and molded by man. In L'Estaque, the evidence was everywhere, from hilly landscapes with houses to images of the railroad viaduct seen against the steep cliffs that keep the village pressed against the sea. In even the most ostensibly classical images, balanced and framed as in landscapes by Poussin, human constructions give evidence of continuity through time. It is as if the juxtaposed factory chimney and church tower embody different epochs and ideologies in the human interaction with the environment. Through L'Estaque's rapid evolution, in other words, Cézanne maintains the sense of continuity between the past and present, enabling him to keep modernity in perspective. Simultaneously, Cézanne's performance of representation becomes less engaged with the particular moment and the specific object, becoming more self-consciously contemplative and inward. In the end, the performance of representation becomes itself his subject, ultimately opening the possibility by the end of the 1880s of painting landscape in places removed from the human presence. In such places, representation evolves to what some consider a phenomenological practice. At the same time, this possibility renewed Cézanne's interest in figure painting, within which he chose themes that synthesize modern and traditional subject matter, such as his Bathers and his Card Players, both of which have well-known precedents in the art of the Old Masters.

Modernism is certainly modern in its self-consciousness, as exemplified by Cézanne. But in the brief time allotted to me I have tried to outline an argument that historicizes the performance of representation as its own subject matter, suggesting it became possible only within an ideology directly rooted in the historical circumstances of nineteenth-century modernity. In calling forth performances of artistic drive and creativity, the ideology of productivity and conditions of the modern economy ultimately gave rise to modernism's focus on performances of representation for their own sake.

<sup>5</sup> "La peinture a pour objet d'exprimer ... la société qui la produit.... Chaque époque ne se connaît que par les fait qu'elle agit : faits politiques, faits littéraires, faits scientifiques, faits industriels, faits artistiques, qui tous sont marqués au coin de son génie propre, portent l'empreinte de son caractère particulier, et la distinguent tout à la fois de l'époque antérieure et de l'époque à suivre." (Jules-Antoine Castagnary, "Salon de 1863," in *Salons* (1857-79), Eugène Spuller, ed., Paris, 1892, I, p. 102.)

<sup>6</sup> James H. Rubin, *Impressionism and the Modern Landscape: Productivity, Technology and Urbanization from Manet to Van Gogh*, University of California Press, Berkeley, forthcoming 2007.

<sup>7</sup> "Attiré par notre goût et nos études vers le grand spectacle de la véritable bataille humaine, nous avons curieusement étudié ces forteresses de l'homme dressées contre sa misère originelle, ces vastes usines où l'habile direction du chef, l'activité du contre-maître et le courageux travail de l'ouvrier concourent à produire les merveilles de notre civilisation." Julien Turgan, *Les Grandes Usines: études industrielles en France et à l'étranger*, 20 vols, Paris 1860-95, I, p. viii.

<sup>8</sup> Véronique Serrano, "Repères chronologiques et morceaux choisis," *L'Estaque*, op. cit., pp. 217-220.

## QUESTIONS DE LA PERFORMANCE À LA PHILOSOPHIE ET AU THÉÂTRE (LA PERFORMANCE, L'ACTEUR ET LE PERFORMEUR)

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### Préliminaire

Je voudrais tout d'abord faire connaître la façon dont ce panel sur le thème de la performance a été établi par Catherine Soussloff et moi-même.

Le thème nous a été proposé par Ales Erjavec que nous remercions de la confiance qu'il nous a accordée. Nous l'avons immédiatement accepté, de même que nous avons accepté avec joie l'idée de travailler ensemble, par mail, bien sûr !

Le cahier des charges comportait une durée générale du panel (9h-13h) et une répartition des temps de parole (30 mn pour chacune des deux introductions et 20 mn pour les interventions ultérieures). Nous avons considéré qu'il fallait à la fois réintroduire une égalité des temps de parole et permettre au maximum d'intervenants intéressés de prendre la parole. Ainsi chacun disposera de 20 mn et vous comprendrez la nécessité de ne pas dépasser ce temps pour ne pas léser les derniers orateurs.

Deux mots du point le plus délicat pour nous : un certain nombre d'interventions nous ont été proposées rapidement, soit directement à Catherine ou à moi, soit par l'intermédiaire du secrétariat du Congrès. Les propositions reçues nous ont semblé intéressantes et nous avons fait en sorte de les garder toutes. Assez vite donc, le panel a été « trop rempli ». Or nous avons continué à recevoir quelques propositions. Sans que leur intérêt soit en cause, nous avons dû les refuser, étant dans l'impossibilité de leur trouver une place dans le temps imparti au panel (à moins de ne pas ouvrir d'espace de discussion ou de procéder à une sorte de « concours » à partir des résumés, ce que nous avons exclu !). Il nous reste à présenter nos excuses à celles ou ceux dont l'intervention n'a pas pu être programmée dans cette matinée et à redire que les interventions, à partir du moment où elles répondaient au thème de façon intéressante, ont été retenues en fonction de leur date d'arrivée.

Ces précisions me permettent d'enchaîner directement sur mon « introduction » à ce panel.

La question qui me préoccupe est celle de savoir quelle est la fonction, aujourd'hui, en 2006, de la performance comme catégorie esthétique, au même titre que la peinture, la danse, le cinéma, la vidéo, la photographie ou le

théâtre, toutes disciplines artistiques avec lesquelles de toute évidence la performance interfère, par rapport auxquelles on peut considérer tout à la fois qu'elle en est issue, qu'elle les conteste et qu'elle les renouvelle. Je pars du fait que certaines pratiques artistiques s'adressent à un public au titre de « performances », je suppose connue l'histoire de la performance depuis les avant-gardes jusqu'à sa reconnaissance comme catégorie esthétique dans les années soixante-dix et son développement ultérieur. Depuis plus d'un siècle, la performance a secoué le paysage artistique dans une grande partie du monde ; depuis plus de 30 ans, elle a droit de cité, avec quelques réserves, si l'on tient compte du fait qu'elle ne trouve pas toujours aisément les lieux qu'elle souhaite investir, et que sa position, entre *event* et proposition artistique, reste quelque peu incertaine. Sa fonction critique indiscutable, tant à un niveau artistique qu'à un niveau politique, en tant que pratique née au cœur de la contestation opérée par les avant-gardes, est-elle encore avérée en 2006 ? En quoi ce qui se donne comme performance ne peut-il se réclamer d'une pratique relevant des arts visuels ou des arts vivants dans leurs caractéristiques actuelles, après les avant-gardes, après l'effervescence dans les arts tout au long du XX<sup>e</sup> siècle, après donc également l'apport de la performance et des technologies nouvelles que tous ces arts, à moins de n'être que la trace désuète de pratiques dépassées, ont assimilé ? Je pourrai aller jusqu'à poser la question de l'appartenance de la performance, aujourd'hui, au régime de l'art, et ce d'autant plus que je jette un regard outre atlantique, où les « performance studies » ont étendu leur champ bien au-delà de l'histoire de l'art. Je me contenterai de lier la question de la Performance comme genre artistique à la reconnaissance du performeur (u) r comme personnage de la scène artistique. Je vais ainsi resserrer ma problématique en me situant dans l'entre-deux de la performance et du théâtre, là où précisément la performance a secoué le théâtre de sa léthargie jusqu'à l'investir, le déconstruire comme genre et provoquer la déception de spectateurs qui ne cessent de vitupérer que « ce n'est pas du théâtre » ; c'est à partir de là que je livrerai quelques questions de philosophe aux spécialistes de la performance, autour du « performer », de l'agir devant ou pour un public et de l'apparition du performeur (u) r comme personnage à part entière dans le champ de l'art.



Lorsque la performance interpelle le théâtre et tourne quasiment en ridicule cette forme d'art dont elle annonce la disparition, elle met en avant le fait d'être un art vivant qui déploie son action *hic et nunc*, dans un lieu faisant place à une assistance, laquelle suit ce qui se passe en temps réel, et peut donc interagir. Les artistes sont les personnages présents sur ce qui tient lieu de scène, ils n'ont plus de raison d'être considérés comme des «comédiens» mais comme des acteurs ou sens où ils sont «actants», sans être intermédiaires ou passeurs de quoi que ce soit, mais en vivant une expérience qu'ils ressentent dans tout leur être et en s'adressant directement à nous qui sommes là pour écouter, regarder, éventuellement prendre part ; d'ailleurs, tous les signes qui manifestent qu'il s'agit de quelque chose qui se déroule au présent, en temps réel, en présence d'une assistance effective, sont accentués, l'intérêt étant plus ou moins implicitement stimulé par la curiosité, le suspens lié au fait que quelque chose arrive, se passe, devant nous ; on renoue avec le plaisir du «direct», ou le caractère intrigant du fait divers, qui fait appel à la dimension de risque inhérente à toute action et à l'émotion qui lui est liée. On pourrait s'arrêter sur la façon dont la routine et l'ennui sont rompus par le fait qu'un événement nouveau est annoncé et que l'expérience va en être faite, et relire à la fois Freud lorsqu'il remarque que le plaisir de la scène est lié à cet espoir, et Benjamin lorsqu'il déplore la disparition de l'expérience dans le monde contemporain, mais cela déborde mon propos d'aujourd'hui.

Je m'intéresse aux caractéristiques de l'«agir» dans le cas de ce que j'appellerai désormais le «**théâtre-performance**». Si je propose de parler du théâtre-performance, c'est pour échapper à la quasi fatwa aristotélicienne qui condamnait la réalité scénique en tant qu'elle relève de l'opsis ou déplace l'attention vers le spectacle : l'«agir» scénique n'était pas indispensable à l'«action» propre à la tragédie et la pratique de l'acteur ne retenait pas l'intérêt en tant que telle. Je considérerai l'œuvre scénique éphémère comme une œuvre à part entière, à l'instar du secteur des «études théâtrales», qui s'est affranchi du joug de la littérature pour acquérir une autonomie dans les institutions éducatives et culturelles françaises. Mais même à partir de là, il semble encore très difficile de traiter de l'acteur ou du jeu dans le contexte de l'œuvre scénique dans la mesure où le théâtre reste prisonnier d'une esthétique de la représentation, au sens général du terme. La façon de parler de l'acteur montre à quel point le théâtre est isolé dans le paysage artistique du XX<sup>e</sup> siècle ; Sartre systématise à mes yeux les conceptions majoritaires qui ont provoqué la révolte des avant-gardes, puisque selon lui, tout élément scénique réel est reçu en tant qu'*analogon* de ce qu'il représente et non pour lui-même. Le jeu est donc écartelé entre ce à quoi il renvoie et ce qu'il montre ; ce qui appartient à l'acteur en tant que personne est neutralisé par un contrat-fictionnel accepté par tout spectateur dès qu'il franchit le seuil du théâtre. On est en droit d'objecter de nombreux disfonctionnements de ce modèle, ne serait-ce qu'à travers le phénomène de starisation qui touche le théâtre et remet en cause la neutralisation : dès que le nom d'une star prend trop de place à l'affiche, on ne cherche plus à voir que la star pendant la représentation. L'attention se focalise sur la personne au détriment de ce au profit de quoi on attendrait qu'elle s'irréalise. Cela vaut pour La Berma, comme Proust l'a remarqué, aussi bien que pour Jean-paul Belmondo.

Ce que j'appelle théâtre-performance, c'est un théâtre qui assume, voire revendique le fait qu'un acteur vit au présent de la représentation et est perçu comme tel par les spectateurs, même dans le cas où l'acte théâtral passe par la profération d'un texte ou le jeu d'un rôle qui préexiste à ce qui est montré. Ma question est alors de situer l'acteur par rapport à celui qui, dans le contexte de la Performance comme genre spécifique, est devenu le performe(u)r. Jusqu'à quand sera-t-il possible et au nom de quels critères, de distinguer l'acteur du performe(u)r ?

Je crois qu'il est temps de prendre un exemple. Je vais évoquer très brièvement ce qui est annoncé comme un «projet» de François-Michel Pesenti : *Les Paésines : auparavant nous ne savions que chanter sous la forme prise au théâtre de Gennevilliers en 2004 : Le jardin des délices*<sup>1</sup>. Jean-Louis Perrier décrit ainsi le spectacle dans le journal *Le Monde* (sous la rubrique «théâtre») : «Entre les rangs des spectateurs, placés face-à-face, une longue estrade laquée sang frais, fermée d'un côté par un jeu de miroirs, de l'autre par une cloison de bois qui retentit au moindre choc. Huit créatures prostrées (quatre femmes et quatre hommes), assaillies de tics et de tremblements, bavent, geignent, se grattent et râlent, ricanent et hurlent, avec le regard de bêtes au seuil de l'abattoir, avant de ramper comme serpents ou marcher comme crabes pour tenter de s'accoupler, une heure durant, le temps d'épuiser les combinaisons possibles». Comme on peut en trouver la confirmation dans le journal *Libération*, «quelque chose s'est rompu. Les conventions qui règlent nos gestes et tempèrent nos comportements n'ont plus cours. (...) C'est le metteur en scène François-Michel Pesenti qui est à l'origine de ce spectacle hors normes. Ni danse ni théâtre : des corps de comédiens lancés dans l'espace, livrés à eux-mêmes, sans filet ou presque.» Hugues Le Tanneur explicite moins sa désapprobation dans *Libération* que, dans *Le Monde*, Jean-Louis Perrier, dont on sent bien les réticences et la façon dont il a été touché. Lui aussi précise à quel point le «jeu» ne respecte plus les conventions du théâtre : «La déformation des sons n'a d'égale que celle des visages et des corps, difficilement contenue dans les frontières du simulacre théâtral. Le premier sang est signe que l'acteur sort de son rôle. Pour le reste, bleus et bosses sont bienvenus et sont signes du travail accompli.»

Je relève un premier point qui va m'amener à réfléchir : l'acteur n'en est plus vraiment un aux yeux du critique, en ce sens qu'il ne se réfère à aucun rôle, dramatique ou issu de la culture ou de la mythologie, qu'il réagit en temps réel de tout son être, qu'il se met en danger, parle et agit «pour de vrai», en son nom propre et assume les conséquences. Un autre point m'intéresse particulièrement par rapport à celui que je viens d'énoncer : chaque soir, cette «dramaturgie sauvage» pour reprendre l'expression du metteur en scène, se confronte à des intervenants nouveaux qui maintiennent «un principe d'incertitude», qui déstabilise le théâtre. C'est ce principe initiateur d'une d'improvisation qui enracine la proposition dans le temps réel, promet un *event* renouvelé «en direct» chaque soir et explique le terme «Paésines» : «chaque représentation, écrit Pesenti, soumettra les acteurs à un système de contraintes et d'incitations élaboré en direct par le metteur en scène, les assistants et les techniciens de façon à ce que, sur le modèle géologique des *paésines* – qui produit des paysages

<sup>1</sup> théâtre de Gennevilliers du 29 janvier au 15 février 2004

variés (ruines, désert, mer en furie, etc.) – chaque soir s'écrit notre *païsine théâtrale* dont nous exigeons qu'elle soit, ce soir-là, soit intime, soit métaphysique, soit politique.» Le document remis au spectateur à l'entrée dans la salle précisait que les acteurs seraient ainsi mis sous pression par «des artistes venus d'horizons artistiques divers (performance, musique, arts plastiques, danse).»<sup>2</sup> Le protocole fut respecté. Selon les soirs, des personnes se sont présentées ensemble à partir de positions très différentes, puisque les invités temporaires n'étaient pas impliqués au même titre que les acteurs présents lors de chaque mise en œuvre du projet ; aux invités revenait la fonction de «perturber les certitudes» auxquelles les acteurs voudraient s'accrocher. Dans la présentation de son projet, Pesenti indiquait que le spectacle convoque «l'insurrection des acteurs» pour «refonder le geste poétique de ceux-ci et la responsabilité du public jouissant qui, nous l'imaginons, les glorifie et les condamne.» Comment, dans un tel contexte, un performe(u)r se distingue-t-il d'un acteur ?

Pesenti avait francisé par l'orthographe le mot anglais «performer». Celui qui «perform» ou performe si l'on francise encore, c'est, selon les usages du terme en anglais, celui qui parle, exécute un mouvement, accomplit une action, remplit une fonction, «joue», chante ou danse, l'accent portant sur l'accomplissement plutôt que sur sa teneur. Le verbe anglais *to perform* couvre à la fois le caractère performatif de toute interprétation ou de toute action dans le contexte traditionnel de ce qui demande une actualisation et le fait de se montrer en train d'accomplir un acte, au sens faible de faire quelque chose, même s'il ne s'agit que d'effectuer certains mouvements, voire d'être là pour ce que l'on est, en revendiquant sa propre identité. La langue anglaise dispose d'un terme pour désigner le caractère performatif, quelle que soit la performance accomplie, ce qui est une manière intéressante de découper la réalité en construisant la pure catégorie de l'agir (d'un agir éventuellement faible, équivalent de faire). Cela me conduit à remarquer que lorsqu'il y a une performance, il y a quelqu'un qui perform(e) et que même s'il ne fait qu'être là, ce qui est le degré zéro du performer, il perform(e) encore du seul fait de se présenter-à-une-assistance, d'être présent devant un public. Je suis donc en train d'avancer que le fait de «performer» et la performance qui englobe toutes les modalités de cette attitude, impliquent un sujet, renvoient à une subjectivité, qui intervient au titre d'auteur à défaut de toujours intervenir au titre d'artiste, et implique également d'autres sujets qui savent, à travers la présence du performe(u)r, poser la question du sujet. Je me demande donc si la fréquence avec laquelle la performance comme genre pose la question de l'identité n'est pas liée à ce qui la fait surgir comme telle dans l'horizon de la langue et par rapport à un Réel où la problématique du sujet est à construire. Cela permettrait de lier l'existence même de la performance aujourd'hui à cette fonction de maintenir l'horizon d'une subjectivité.

**J**e reviens au théâtre pour interroger le jeu de l'acteur, à partir du performer qu'il partage avec le performe(u)r. Que fait l'acteur dans le contexte le plus traditionnel ? S'il endosse un rôle, joue un personnage, il prend des at-

titudes, montre des actes qui crédibilisent la présence de celui-ci sur la scène et sont attribués, donc, au personnage plutôt qu'à celui qui l'incarne ou qui s'irréalise en lui (pour retenir la leçon sartrienne). Dans ce contexte, il est amené à en faire trop pour renforcer l'illusion et il se dépossède de son titre de sujet au profit d'un sujet fictionnel, d'une figure inscrite dans le patrimoine culturel et souvent psychologisée au maximum. Le sur-jeu est donc l'autre versant d'une dépossession de soi et l'on comprend bien ce que l'irruption d'un performe(u)r à ses côtés peut induire. D'ailleurs, le théâtre l'a compris tout seul et depuis qu'il y a des traités à l'usage des gens de théâtre, on trouve la recommandation de chercher le «naturel», de ne pas en faire trop, de rapprocher l'acteur du personnage ou de ce que serait celui-ci s'il vivait vraiment parmi nous. Si l'on prend les formes de jeu qui ont renoncé à la simple illustration redondante du texte ou du rôle (j'entends par là par exemple le fait de ne pas se courber pour faire vieux ou parce que le texte dit qu'il y a courbure), on y trouve encore une habitude étrange consistant à sur-agir, en quelque sorte gratuitement, pour occuper le corps ou passer le temps. Je songe à ces comportements si fréquents sur une scène, consistant à parcourir plus ou moins fébrilement l'espace, à s'asseoir et se lever sans nécessité, à boire ou manger sans raison ou à accentuer certains mouvements physiologiques, à se livrer à une occupation comme déplacer/ranger des objets, plier du linge, etc, sans que ces gestes ne puissent se constituer en signe ou prétendre à une quelconque signification. De tels choix de jeu résultent encore de l'interdit d'être soi, d'agir en son nom propre, qui pèse sur l'acteur dans ce contexte. La logique de ces actions machinales est pourtant non seulement de permettre à un acteur de ne pas être le pur instrument de profération d'un texte, mais de faire exister son corps et sa propre identité pendant qu'il est visible sur scène, même si c'est par le biais de gestes involontaires ou mécaniques que l'on pourrait désigner comme des mouvements, qu'ils soient plus ou moins instinctifs ou mis en forme et transmis par un groupe social ; le «*performing act*» qu'est l'interprétation d'un texte dramatique ou de n'importe quel texte proféré sur une scène, ne devient pas pour autant une performance. Il est même relativisé et négligé en tant que tel par tout public au fait de ce qu'est l'art contemporain, qui attend de l'œuvre scénique qu'elle se développe comme œuvre sur le terrain qui lui est propre.

Il reste que dans certains cas limites, lorsque le public loue la «performance» d'un acteur (performance étant entendu au sens de manière d'accomplir sa tâche), parce qu'il en apprécie donc la prestation, le *performing act* d'un acteur pourrait être considéré comme très proche de ce que propose un performe(u)r. J'en prends pour exemple la façon dont Marcial Di Fonzo Bo a joué, sous la direction de Claude Régy, *Paroles du sage*. Il s'est interdit tous les artifices du métier que je viens de rappeler : il n'a pas surjoué un texte, n'a rien illustré ni signifié, il ne s'est pas donné pour un autre que lui-même, il n'a tout simplement rien joué ni rien fait d'autre que de laisser les mots l'affecter et surgir de son corps. Les seules manifestations irrépressibles qu'il a produites étaient liés au fait de laisser le texte le traverser : son corps aussi inexpressif que possible ne laissait s'exprimer au sens étymologique du terme que la bave, la transpiration, la morve, les larmes. Chaque soir, cette manière d'être se reproduisait ainsi que les écoulements, mais jamais à l'identique. Si l'acteur ne se dévoilait pas en tant qu'individu dans cette présence, son corps néanmoins était

<sup>2</sup> Ayaient alors confirmé leur participation Andreas Pronegg (Kombinat théâtre, acteur, Vienne/Autriche), Eric Houzelot (acteur, Marseille), Nicolas Primat (performeur, Marseille), Dalila Khatir (chanteuse, Paris), Edmond Hovadian (musicien, Marseille), Yann Marussich (danseur, Genève), eRikm (musicien, Marseille).

suffisamment proche (du fait du dispositif global instauré) pour être senti physiquement par le public et sa personne offerte «en direct». Face à cette mise en rapport en public d'un être et d'une écriture, beaucoup se sont plaints de ne pas trouver de théâtre et, de fait, on était peut-être confronté à une performance, dans tous les sens du terme. Il était indiscutable en tout cas que la rencontre de cet «acteur-performe(u)r» et d'un public posait immédiatement la question du sujet, de l'identité de ceux qui se faisaient face !

Or c'est précisément l'effet recherché par Pesenti lorsqu'il «lance» sur la scène un performe(u)r au milieu des acteurs, pour les déstabiliser. L'irruption du performe(u)r trouble la continuité du propos des acteurs, interroge au présent, avec le contrat fictionnel, tout ce qui constituait leur passé commun lors du travail d'exploration et de recherche préalable à la présentation à un public ainsi que les conventions qui protègent le jeu. Il est là pour faire tache, pour offrir le spectacle de sa personne. Par sa simple présence, il force à s'interroger sur ce que font les acteurs dans le cas du *Jardin des délices* ; il remet en question aussi la notion même d'acteur qu'il renvoie à son histoire, de manière critique. Tout le malaise ressenti par les spectateurs et stigmatisé par la critique vient de cette interrogation sur l'identité et le sujet que le projet pousse au-delà des limites généralement admises, pour faire paraître cet «inavouable» dont les acteurs témoignent. Théâtre ou Performance ? Pesenti d'une autre manière que Régy rend manifeste ce qui permet à un individu s'adressant à d'autres d'exister à la première personne, d'être soi-même, de chercher une subjectivation, une fois déconstruits les discours ou les rôles faussement inculqués comme «naturels» par la société ou offerts dans le cadre des conventions régissant l'art théâtral. Quoi qu'il ait été effectivement montré, dans aucun de ces deux exemples, performer n'implique un «agir» au sens fort du terme. Par rapport à la question de la nature de l'agir en présence d'un public, tout se passe comme si, tant du côté du théâtre que du côté de la performance, la part d'activisme lié à l'idée d'agir était inadéquate. Performer, c'est être-avec, à la fois dans les limites de l'aire de jeu et au-delà, dans ce qui l'englobe. Moins il est fait de part au spectaculaire et à l'activisme, plus la question que pose le seul fait de performer, c'est celle du sujet qui performe, de son identité. Désigner l'acteur par le terme de performe(u)r serait donc indiquer de quelle manière l'art théâtral aujourd'hui se situe au même niveau de réflexion que l'ensemble des arts, à travers le médium qui lui est propre, c'est-à-dire la personne vivante confrontée en temps réel au risque de l'autre et à la recherche de soi.

Mais alors l'omniprésence du performeur aujourd'hui, liée au développement de la Performance comme genre, signet-elle à long terme le déclin de la vertu de la performance, indique-t-elle qu'elle a déjà rempli sa fonction, du moins dans le champ de l'art ? Incite-t-elle à ne plus l'utiliser comme catégorie esthétique ? Je laisserai bien sûr la question ouverte.

## SOCIABLE EUROPE AS A LANDSCAPE: INSIGHTS FROM THE EUROPEAN LANDSCAPE CONVENTION AESTHETICS OF BODILY SENSES

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*Reality offers, like a landscape, infinitely many perspectives, which are all equally true and have equal rights ... the only perspective which is wrong is the one which claims to be the only one.*

José Ortega y Gasset

Europe – the saying goes – is made: now we have to make the Europeans. That is: as economic and (partially) political European integration are completed, the debate has shifted from the rhetoric of integration to that of *identity*<sup>1</sup>. Continents, it has been noted, tend to become metageographical concepts: metaphors for cultural, rather than 'just' geographical units; this can be seen as a distortion of reality (Lewis and Wigen 1997), but also, on the contrary, as a space for new meaning (Ifversen 2002). This is particularly true for Europe, that not only is more and more identified with the fast developing EU institution (rather than with the continent, only partially comprised) but also, being in search for an identity legitimating the institutional developments, increasingly prompts new formulations of its specificity as an idea and cultural unit, one however that has to keep an equal emphasis on the constitutive diversity of the European nations and peoples. This peculiar combination of the protection of diversity and promotion of unity, which has provided European institutions (both EU and Council of Europe in particular) with the main narrative of European identity so far, finds an extremely clear and explicit formulation in the recent European landscape convention (ELC). In this recent convention (signed in 2000, and entered into force in the first ten ratifying countries in 2004)<sup>2</sup> landscape is conceived of as the experience of the unity of the nature/culture dynamics emerging through a plurality of specific characters. Indeed, what the many disciplines that deal with it, from its aesthetical definition to more intervention-oriented disciplines such as geography and plan-

ning, share is the idea that landscape perception entails the capacity to see a plurality of elements that are, and stay, different as a unity (Mitchell 2002). Through the idea of landscape, the 'diversity of common heritage' – a recurring expression in Euro-rhetoric – is articulated, because, according to current definition diversity is an element of all landscapes, and not only between landscapes, but *within* landscape. Indeed, we could affirm that the current way of speaking of European identity resonates with the aesthetic definition of landscape, and this prompts a consideration of European identity with an aesthetic approach, exploring the distinctively aesthetic solution of the combination of integration and differentiation, or universal and particular, that so worries European identity builders. A solution, that is, that does not sacrifice the particular diversities to the universal, but instead finds the latter in the particular, as a form of exemplary rather than generalising, universalism (Ferrara 1998).

Therefore the discursive field that the ELC emerges from and that it creates provides a viewpoint on metageographical representations of Europe and their use in its construction as an 'imagined community' (Anderson 1983). A critical consideration of the ELC implied assumptions and function is the focus of this article, grounded on an analysis of its rhetoric and emerging implementing practices, with particular attention to the Mediterranean area.

### **The European Landscape Convention (ELC): Europe as identity, identity as landscape, Europe as Landscape**

Let me begin with a brief presentation of the ELC. The rationale informing this recent convention and laid out in its Preamble, is expressed in some key passages:

*[T]he landscape contributes to the formation of local cultures and ... it is a basic component of the European natural and cultural heritage, contributing to human well-being and consolidation of the European identity [Preamble].*

*"Landscape" means an area, as perceived by people, whose character is the result of the action and interaction of natural and/or human factors [ELC; Article 1a]*

<sup>1</sup> If academically and institutionally this substitution is three decades old (as testified by the 1973 EC Declaration of European Identity), it is more recently that the concept has become increasingly mobilized in a wider public debate, as the heated controversy about the inclusion of a reference to the Christian heritage in the European Constitutional treaty shows.

<sup>2</sup> As of January 2007, 34 countries have signed the ELC, of which 26 have also ratified it, see Annex 1.

*[Each Party undertakes] to recognise landscapes in law as an essential component of people's surroundings, an expression of the diversity of their shared cultural and natural heritage, and a foundation of their identity [Art. 5 a].*

These statements carry a strong claim for the existence of both a specifically European attitude to landscape as a cultural construct and process, and of this attitude itself as being one of the main components of contemporary 'European' identity, thus deserving fostering and protection<sup>3</sup>. However the connection between landscape, identity and Europe is all but evident, and scholars have tended to stress how landscape, especially as conceived as a sub-category of natural and cultural heritage, is a strong component of national, if not local, identity. David Lowenthal, for instance, famously stated that landscape is a «compelling symbol of national identity» (Lowenthal 1993, 6). This is not only due to the fact that in general «as a modern endeavour, the question of identity found its answer in the idea of the nation and in the national state as its political, social, economic, and cultural expression» (as social theorist Peter Wagner wrote, significantly, in a publication of the Council of Europe, cf. Wagner 2000, 17), but even more specifically to the fact that «landscape is poorly placed to perform the role of consolidating European identity, because, of all types of heritage, it is one whose significance is regional rather than pan-European» (Last 2006, 10). Indeed this seems confirmed also by the fact that studies on landscape perception or appreciation tend to focus on very small scale ethnographies, on the assumption that what counts as landscape for some may not be so for others (Voisenat and Nottheghem 1994). The existence of national, as well as disciplinary, different and sometimes contrasting traditions reinforces these objections<sup>4</sup>.

However these critiques are all based on a particular definition of heritage, and indeed of identity; a definition, to put it shortly, of which precisely the nation – and the national monument – are not only a manifestation but also the dominant blue-print. This paper attempts at exploring another possibility, that of considering the ELC as part and parcel of a different conceptualization of both heritage and identity, thus indicative of a paradigmatic shift that finds in these recent landscape rhetorics and practices at the same time a cause, an effect and a symbol. This approach thus aims at being relevant both for the understanding of the ELC impact in the field of landscape policies and for the interrogation of the rhetorical and practical function that concepts such as landscape and identity are called to fulfil in the debate on Europe. This will be attempted here through a contextualization of the ELC in its discursive field and then

trying to follow the concepts as they are put into practice in a few examples of implementation of the ELC.

## Landmarks of European identity: from monuments to landscapes

An enlightening way to contextualise the ELC is to compare it with other, previous Conventions in the field. Reading the ELC's full text and explanatory report, which carefully details its gestation with the contribution of several institution, and in an ideal dialogue with a series of previous conventions in the field, we can articulate the identity element in a few shifts that the ELC introduces in relation also to other international European agreements quoted in its preamble<sup>5</sup>. A parallel reading of these instruments highlights how landscape is instrumental to some relevant shifts in the heritage discourse. In extreme synthesis, the increasing emphasis on heritage as landscape means:

- 1) a shift from a list of specific items or sites towards more comprehensive definitions,
- 2) a shift from outstanding to everyday value and, finally,
- 3) a shift from mere protection to management, planning and promotion.

Of course, these three interrelated passages are particularly evident in the ELC, but they do not appear in it out of the blue, rather they gradually emerge at least since the end of the '80s. It is in particular the role of the list that makes this readily visible: many of the initiatives that are quoted in the ELC as its forebears do require lists, either directly attached or left to the signatory states. Here the ELC is particularly significant, as the list is not only avoided, but positively rejected, as demonstrated by the fact that a drafted Article 12 of the ELC on the nomination of a "List of Landscapes of European Significance" has been eventually dropped.

We could also summarize these shifts by saying that the ELC more consistently requires territorial rather than sectorial policies in this field, and that a move has been made from a monumental approach to what I call an experiential one. By this I refer to the consideration not of single elements, but of all the framework, and moreover not a sense of property towards highly charged monuments, for which a special status or 'essence' is claimed, and claims in return a sense of 'innate' belonging, but emphasis on quality of life and thus 'everyday value', appreciated for the type of multifaceted experiences that are enabled by it. It is a difference of emphasis, towards a more active and open space for subjects: indeed we could say, borrowing from geography, that landscape can become the meeting ground of space – conceived of as a malleable 'field of relations', and place – as a fixed and culturally charged and bound territory. It can thus both avoid the emptiness of the space (as in the Castells's «space of fluxes», or Auge's non-lieux), and the rigidity of space, becoming what we

<sup>3</sup> For a critical consideration of the intellectual tradition based on the European 'invention' of landscape in modernity see Venturi Ferriolo (2002) and Milani (2001). For a social history of landscape in art see A. Cauquelin (1989), along with the 'classic' essay by Gombrich (1966) and its problematisation by Mitchell (1995). See also, in English, Lowenthal 1993, 1994 and Olwig 1993; and in French Luginbühl 1989.

<sup>4</sup> For an updated account of the multidisciplinary debate on landscape, highlighting its relevance for social theory and detailing in particular the material culture perspective developed in the UK (within archaeological and geographical approaches informed by cultural studies in particular) see the recent special issue on *Landscape, heritage and identity*, of the «Journal of Material Culture» (2006, July issue).

<sup>5</sup> These are: the Convention on the Conservation of European Wildlife and Natural Habitats (Bern, 19 September 1979), the Convention for the Protection of the Architectural Heritage of Europe (Granada, 3 October 1985), the European Convention on the Protection of the Archaeological Heritage (revised) (Valletta, 16 January 1992), the European Outline Convention on Transfrontier Co-operation between Territorial Communities or Authorities (Madrid, 21 May 1980) and its additional protocols, the European Charter of Local Self-government (Strasbourg, 15 October 1985), the Convention on Biological Diversity (Rio, 5 June 1992), the Convention concerning the Protection of the World Cultural and Natural Heritage (Paris, 16 November 1972), and the Convention on Access to Information, Public Participation in Decision-making and Access to Justice on Environmental Matters (Aarhus, 25 June 1998).

could define, following De Certeau's «activated places» (De Certeau 1984; Clifford 1997)<sup>6</sup>. This is because emphasis is on continuous transformation, and on memory as process rather than as (invented) tradition. It goes without saying that landscapes are not, per se, essentially, linked to this different approach, indeed a landscape can be conceived as a national symbol or monument (see Lowenthal 1994, but also Shama 1995, Muir 1999), but the fact that this is not the case is all the more relevant. What is significant is the statement the ELC is making by choosing this approach, and on the more wide ranging reflections it prompts on European identity.

This can be substantiated further considering the words of Riccardo Priore, the COE official that has followed the ELC from its very beginning. During a recent workshop on landscape, having made a net distinction between the concept of Landscape or landscape as an asset, and particular, actual landscapes, Priore replied as follows to the question of how indeed landscape is connected to European identity:

*European identity is linked to the concept of Landscape (with a capital L), and not to specific landscapes (in the plural), for the time being. For the time being there is no memory, common experience which can contribute to a common identity; it is impossible to build European identity on that, but it is possible on Landscape, Landscape (with a capital L) as an asset. There is a widespread social demand for landscape. Of course when one refers to specific landscapes then it is local identity in connection to landscapes.*

So, the idea of landscape is European, landscapes are many and local. I would specify: the European idea of Landscape is that, in its very definition, landscape implies diversity – and a sense of belonging to this diversity – and thus can be envisaged as a peculiar attitude towards landscape, and as a social demand for the protection for diversity as richness. Already in his speech Priore had said:

*The demand that a growing number of European citizens is addressing to public authorities so that everyday landscapes are properly protected, managed and planned clearly indicates that these landscapes represent an essential part of people's local identity but also, conceived as a common asset, of their sense of belonging to the European community (Priore 2006, 47).*

The general implication is that to enlarge the traditional notion of heritage to integrate that of landscape means also to reformulate in terms of the latter the connection of heritage to a group's or community's identity. In other words,

not only landscape changes being included in a new discursive field, but also the specificity of landscape feeds-back on what can be said and done within the policies that now include it, and that this becomes possible is only interpreted in the wider rhetorical and relation context of the ELC, or, in its own word, in the context of the growing 'social demand' for landscape. This convention promotes an Europeanization that carries at the same time a common form and diversified local contents. The policy of landscape aims at being European, and thus common, as far as some framework principles and methodologies, but does not go as far as producing a common definition of European landscape. In the expression European landscape convention, 'European' is a specification of Convention, and not of landscape. As official documents, academic text and the words of involved experts confirm, the ELC, in this early phase, is above all about exchanging expertise and creating networks at European level, so that landscape becomes a common concern, however diverse definitions and traditions might be, and stay. This is why we will now concentrate on some local exercises of implementation of the ELC], because it is there that we can look for the content that fills this new conceptual framework.

### The ELC towards implementation: notes from fieldwork

I will now refer to the result of interviews and document analysis on some first attempts at implementing the ELC, that have taken place in the first years of 2000 and mainly within EU framework funding schemes. This meant that implementation is still mainly realized at the level of pilot actions, that different actors are proposing across Europe. These seem to address mainly the creation of international networks, the identification of transfrontier landscapes (object of a specific disposition in the ELC), the promotion of awareness campaigns and public participation in landscape issues, as well as sharing a focus on the identification of apt methodologies, as implied by their nature of pilot actions. This should be connected to the mentioned fact that it is in particular in the framework of EU programmes that actions inspired by the ELC find place. Let's consider two examples, taken from the Mediterranean area, of pilot projects: *European Pathways to the Cultural Landscape and Landscape Opportunities for Territorial Organization*.

*European Pathways to the Cultural Landscape* is a three year project (2001-2003) funded by the EU Programme Culture 2000. It is a network of 12 partners of ten different European countries, and one of the aims is precisely to render the network and partnership permanent through projects. In synthesis, it is the creation of a common forum for discussion and co-operation with regard to landscape, in particular through meetings, staff exchange and shared projects. The specific objectives are the understanding of cultural landscapes, marginal landscape in particular. In the final report of the project, entitled *Pathways to Europe's Landscape*, the ELC is explicitly recalled, together with a claim that: 'we believe that landscape is a central part of the European common heritage and culture, and that it "belongs" in a very real sense to all citizens of Europe' (Clark *et al.*, 2003, n.n.). It is worth citing as this common and 'distinctly European' character is explained in the following:

*Our regions are all very different: from mountain to marsh, from the Atlantic to the Baltic, from forest to farmland. Yet we have found that this variety (and the*

<sup>6</sup> This perspective can be connected also to Ingold's heideggerian «dwelling perspective» of landscape, see Ingold 1993. However here the emphasis is on contemporary landscapes, thus rather than on landscape as «constituted as an enduring record of ... the lives and works of past generations who have dwelt within it» (ibid, 152), it focuses on the active, present experience of dwelling rather than on its crystallized result. See also Mitchell 2002, vii-xii, and for an attempt at integrating phenomenological (Bachelard and Heidegger) and Marxist (Lefebvre, de Certeau and Foucault) approaches to the related concepts of place and space (without direct thematization of landscape though) see Harvey 1996, 291-326.

even richer diversity of our cultures, languages and food, or 'taste-scapes') is matched by an equally rich common heritage that unites our landscapes and makes them very recognisably and distinctively European. We discovered that this combination of diversity and unity was a powerful force for increased mutual understanding, respect and friendship, just as too was our exchange of experience and expertise. We firmly believe that the landscape can be a strong and vital part of European unity, and we think that our project ... is a symbol of European partnership and shared culture (Clark et al., 2003, n.n).

Asked to elaborate further this theme of European identity as reflected in landscape, one of the creators of this project has replied during interview:

*Landscape is the place where people live, therefore by definition it is linked to identity. But identity has become more complicated than in the past, due to the greater mobility of people [...]. It is not as simple as it used to be (or at least was thought to be) only one or two generations ago. It is not any longer sufficiently described with terms like Heimat, as it used to be in the past in Germany. It has become more complicated and multi-layered. But a sense of identity is crucial for the sustainable management of landscapes. Only with a sense of ownership and pride will people care for the landscape and work for it. Only with a good knowledge about the specific aspects of a certain landscape can it be managed in an intelligent way, preserving individual aspects in landscapes undergoing rapid and deep change. The European aspect to me is a necessary anchor point within globalization, building a Europe which has not only common economic interests but a common cultural, social and political framework. Europe in all its diversity nevertheless has a relatively well defined geographical outline and more important common historic and cultural denominators. These are reflected in the landscape, which is a result of human influence and therefore a cultural entity which cannot be separated from its history and cultural background [...]. [T]he projects and their European integration helps to strengthen the sense of identity, ownership and pride in the people living in the landscapes. First of all this is the sense of identity on a very local and regional level, but to some extent even a European identity is formed through the pride people take in the European interest stated in their landscape.*

The point is thus not whether the Europeanist rhetoric is used instrumentally, but the fact that as well as a lobbying instrument the new language of landscape promoted at European level is, to use again the revealing words of the interviewee, 'a platform to meet like-minded people': landscapes are many and different, but it is in an attitude to

them and towards diversity itself as a constitutive part of them that one can envisage a common element, which can be referred to as an element of identity. Obviously, this does not refer to any essence of specific landscape (or identity), that is local, but to relations of recognition, between individuals, territories and institutions.

Similar themes emerge and are specified in my other example, the project *Landscape Opportunities for Territorial Organization* (LOTO). This is a three year project (2003-2005) funded by the EU initiative Interreg III B. This is interesting because Interreg is aimed at territorial development, is financed under the European Regional Development Fund (ERDF) and is, allegedly, designed to 'strengthen economic and social cohesion'. It does so charting a map of Europe that delineates specific areas, thus promoting the formation of large groups of European regions, that at the same time transcend the national context and valorise specific local features. Interreg III is a territorial, rather than sectorial, programme, based on the strategic relevance given to natural and cultural heritage for territorial development, as expressed also in the European Spatial Development Perspective (Potsdam 1999). For instance in the Central Adriatic Danubian South-Eastern European Space (CADSES), under priority 3.3, projects are financed aimed at 'Protecting and developing landscape'. It is in this framework that the project LOTO is being carried out<sup>8</sup>. The project provides this self-presentation:

*As emphasized by the ESDP and the European Landscape Convention, the different landscape characterization of the territories is a resource to safeguard. Given that the territory is constantly developing, transformations of the landscape cannot be avoided, but it is important for them to be guided with awareness. On the other hand, whoever designs or plans the territory does not easily have access to tools that can be used to resolve the problem. The project intends to provide tools that govern the evolution of the landscape through the knowledge of the dynamics of transformation, intending the landscape itself as a reference framework for any project of an accurate and territorial scale, aimed at directing the territorial planning/design tools in a complementary manner. So, we propose identifying a method of interpreting the landscape that could be a shared operative reference to guide and verify the territorial transformation choices.*

But again, it is in the direct words of one of the involved individuals, responsible for the project on behalf of the region Emilia-Romagna, that we see the real expected and desired outcome of the project, that is, networking itself:

*LOTO has been conceived to start experimenting the implementation of the ELC at the level of some regional experiences. Especially through the construction of a methodology for interpreting the landscape that can support planning and project-making. The different*

<sup>7</sup> This means that both approaches to EU programmes and their rhetoric, instrumental and otherwise, are present, as my interviewee stressed very openly: 'The reference to identity in general and to a European identity particularly are real and important parts of the project. But of course they are also used to secure funding with the EU and phrasing is prescribed by the application guidelines. I do not see that as a contradiction or a problem, as our own interests and those of the EU meet here without any need to force the matter. In our own regional project Europe plays a very important role for the identification of the local people with their own landscape as well as our project.'

<sup>8</sup> The project leader is the Regione Lombardia (Italy). The partners are: Ministry for Cultural Heritage and Activities; Regione Umbria, Regione Marche, Regione Emilia Romagna, Regione Veneto (Italy), Regione Istria (Croatia), Ministry for environmental and spatial planning (Slovenia) Technical University of Munich (Germany), Istituto Urban Project (Romania).

partners have chosen different areas of investigation and, as far as we are concerned we have addressed the issue of valorisation. [...] The idea is to exchange different visions with the European partners. As I said, the experiences at European level are the most diverse, there are countries that participate in LOTO that have never dealt with the management of landscape, I'm thinking here of Romania, or instead that do it in a particular way, such as the University of Munich, that deals with landscape in terms of landscape ecology. Because another problem with landscape is multiplicity, and thus each discipline tends to appropriate it and develop it according to a certain vision. With LOTO we wanted to contribute to the reflection with regard to which activities should be tried out, activities that would not be confined to planning and regulation. We think this is one of the elements that have to become key in the new policies of landscape.

In this type of project the European rhetoric of the 'construction of a common European space' is realized *de facto*, although that space acquires its legitimisation only by allowing diversity. Vice versa, each specific, diverse, instance finds a place there only if it accepts to be one among many, that is, if it accepts the form of 'unity in diversity'. The scenery of European landscape policies is thus one characterised by a Europeanization that carries at the same time a common form and diversified local contents. This does not mean or imply acritically accepting the EU's own rhetoric that makes everyone a 'partner', denying power struggles and differentials of forces, but it does point out the windows of opportunities that are open to different subjects, but it does point out to the windows of opportunities that are open to different subjects, something that is best appreciated at the local (but internationally networked) level.

This is why Europeanization is something that is at the same time very much widespread and possible to observe only taking into consideration local contexts. Introduced as a rhetorical gimmick or not, the 'unity in diversity' seems to be the landscape that regions and cities are outlining in Europe.

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## ANNEX I

EUROPEAN LANDSCAPE CONVENTION: SIGNATURES AND RATIFICATIONS, AS OF JANUARY 2007			
States	Signature	Ratification	Entry into force
Albania			
Andorra			
Armenia	14/5/2003	23/3/2004	1/7/2004
Austria			
Azerbaijan	22/10/2003		
Belgium	20/10/2000	28/10/2004	1/2/2005
Bosnia and Herzegovina			
Bulgaria	20/10/2000	24/11/2004	1/3/2005
Croatia	20/10/2000	15/1/2003	1/3/2004
Cyprus	21/11/2001	21/6/2006	1/10/2006
Czech Republic	28/11/2002	3/6/2004	1/10/2004
Denmark	20/10/2000	20/3/2003	1/3/2004
Estonia			
Finland	20/10/2000	16/12/2005	1/4/2006
France	20/10/2000	17/3/2006	1/7/2006
Georgia			
Germany			
Greece	13/12/2000		
Hungary	28/9/2005		
Iceland			
Ireland	22/3/2002	22/3/2002	1/3/2004
Italy	20/10/2000	4/5/2006	1/9/2006
Latvia	29/11/2006		
Liechtenstein			
Lithuania	20/10/2000	13/11/2002	1/3/2004
Luxembourg	20/10/2000	20/09/2006	1/1/2007
Malta	20/10/2000		
Moldova	20/10/2000	14/3/2002	1/3/2004
Monaco			
Netherlands	27/7/2005	27/7/2005	1/11/2005
Norway	20/10/2000	23/10/2001	1/3/2004
Poland	21/12/2001	27/9/2004	1/1/2005
Portugal	20/10/2000	29/3/2005	1/7/2005
Romania	20/10/2000	7/11/2002	1/3/2004
Russia			
San Marino	20/10/2000	26/11/2003	1/3/2004
Serbia			
Slovakia	30/05/2005	9/8/2005	1/12/2005
Slovenia	7/3/2001	25/9/2003	1/3/2004
Spain	20/10/2000		
Sweden	22/2/2001		
Switzerland	20/10/2000		
the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia	15/1/2003	18/11/2003	1/3/2004
Turkey	20/10/2000	13/10/2003	1/3/2004
Ukraine	17/6/2004	10/3/2006	1/7/2006
United Kingdom	21/2/2006	21/11/2006	1/3/2007

[Source: Council of Europe]

## DU SENSORIEL AU SENSUEL, PRATIQUE ARTISTIQUE ET PRATIQUE PÉDAGOGIQUE

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L'enseignement de l'art plastique ne peut pas tourner le dos à l'environnement personnel, social et culturel où l'étudiant a vécu ni à celui où il évoluera. « Les écoles d'art n'existent pas dans l'espace raréfié des idées. Elles sont au cœur de la réalité, d'une réalité faites tout à la fois de désirs, de fantasmes, de vocation, de tradition, de métiers, de marché, de débouchés et d'argent. »<sup>1</sup> (Y. Michaud)

En Tunisie, de la maternelle jusqu'à l'université, la pratique de cet enseignement a subi à plusieurs reprises des changements tant au niveau du contenu et des objectifs, qu'au niveau de la terminologie. En effet, cet enseignement est passé par diverses appellations : dessin d'art, éducation artistique ou arts plastiques. Actuellement, cette dernière appellation semble être de moins en moins satisfaisante et de moins en moins adaptée dans certains ateliers d'enseignement artistique. Ce changement terminologique dénote et confirme en quelque sorte la relation étroite qui existe entre la réalité culturelle, la pratique artistique en mutation continue ainsi que la pédagogie artistique.

Un des objectifs de cet enseignement est de faire épanouir chez l'individu la subjectivité et la sensualité souvent étouffée par le contexte socio-éducatif qui, généralement, favorise plutôt l'objectivité et le conventionnalisme. Ainsi, la formation artistique s'inscrit inévitablement dans une dimension de trans-formation, une formation et sa transgression dans une pédagogie adaptée à l'enseignement en atelier.<sup>2</sup>

Par ailleurs, dans un atelier d'enseignement de l'art plastique, l'étudiant a la possibilité d'une pratique personnelle mise en relation avec le champ artistique très vaste et à géographie de plus en plus variable. D'une part, cet enseignement permet les acquisitions techniques et méthodologiques nécessaires à la création et d'autre part, il conduit l'étudiant à s'approprier certaines formes et attitudes artistiques, en les identifiant et en les actualisant.

Depuis quelques temps, la rapidité du rythme de l'apparition des nouveautés technologiques et artistiques fait qu'il s'établit nécessairement et ponctuellement un décalage entre la réalité institutionnelle, la réalité sociale et la réalité culturelle et artistique. Le pédagogue est alors redevable d'assurer l'articulation et l'interaction entre les trois réalités. Si je pars du principe qu'en chaque individu sommeille un artiste, je dirai que l'enseignement prépare le terrain qui pourrait favoriser sa proclamation ou sa renaissance chez l'étudiant. Ainsi l'école d'art ne forme pas systématiquement des créateurs, mais plutôt des individus qui pourront le devenir un jour.

Dans quelle mesure l'enseignement de la pratique de l'art est en soi une pratique artistique ? Aujourd'hui, comment l'art par des frontières de plus en plus floues et des pratiques croisées, qui agissent par glissement plus tôt que par rupture, intervient-il dans la pratique éducative et pédagogique ?

L'objet de ma communication est de faire part d'un regard poétique sur la pratique de formation en référence à ma propre expérience d'enseignante d'art plastique à l'Ecole d'Architecture de Tunis. Je mettrai l'accent sur l'encadrement dont bénéficie l'étudiant dans sa démarche créatrice, en y observant des interstices divers comme lieux d'interaction du sensoriel et du sensuel, favorisant alors l'émergence, l'événement et aussi la création.

En plus de l'apprentissage de techniques et de la transmission d'un savoir faire par la stimulation du sensoriel, l'enseignant plasticien est, aussi, redevable d'une formation artistique qui touche la propre imagination et la propre sensualité de l'étudiant. La pédagogie devient un art, l'art d'aider l'étudiant à percevoir son environnement, l'art de l'aider à accéder à la connaissance plastique et au plaisir esthétique. Le plus difficile c'est d'arriver à préserver la propre sensibilité de l'étudiant et la singularité de son identité. Il faudrait pour cela le mettre en situation de connaître plus amplement ses capacités sensorielles en vue de les conjuguer et en vue de stimuler sa sensualité et sa perception.<sup>3</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Cf. *Enseigner l'art*, Y. Michaud, Editions Jacqueline Chambon, Nîmes 1993. P11

<sup>2</sup> Dans cette transgression, comment le surmoi du pédagogue et celui de l'étudiant se comportent-ils l'un par rapport à l'autre ? P. Ricœur dans son analyse de l'œuvre de Freud, disait en le citant « [Le surmoi de l'enfant ne se forme pas à l'image des parents, mais bien à l'image du surmoi de ceux-ci ; il s'empile du même contenu, devient le représentant de la tradition, de tous les jugements de valeur qui subsistent à travers les générations.] Il serait donc vain de chercher dans l'explication génétique une justification de l'obligatoire comme tel, du valable comme tel : celui-ci est en quelque sorte donné dans le monde de la culture. » Cf. P. Ricœur, *De l'interprétation, Essai sur Freud*, ed. du Seuil, Paris 1965, p. 200.

<sup>3</sup> « Elle (la perception) est le résultat d'une interprétation des informations sensorielles. Elle nécessite l'intégration de plusieurs sensations sur lesquelles l'individu effectue un choix, prend une décision en fonction de ses connaissances antérieures, de ses attentes... de ses motivations cognitives et affectives, des coûts et des gains éventuels liés à sa décision perceptive. » p14, cf. *Information, sensation et perception*, J-D Bagot, ed. Armand Colin, Paris 1996.

Cet étudiant acquiert petit à petit une attitude de quête artistique et développe en lui un regard autre, un regard actif et un regard critique. Comme disait S. Dali : « Regarder, c'est inventer. »<sup>4</sup>

Pour définir la sensualité E. Souriau disait « On a depuis longtemps remarqué que des impressions sensorielles ne suffisent pas pour qu'il y ait impression esthétiques, et que la sensibilité esthétique ne se réduit pas à l'agrément sensoriel. Mais cependant un certain plaisir sensoriel y entre. Et il est une manière esthétique de contempler le monde. »<sup>5</sup>

Enseigner l'art plastique n'est sûrement pas une transmission des connaissances à sens unique. L'enseignant se met alors dans une disposition de communication, c'est à dire une situation de transmission à double sens : prendre en vue de donner et donner en vue de prendre. Quel que soit le contexte, l'artiste pédagogue ne peut ignorer ou faire abstraction totale de son être et de sa subjectivité. Il doit sa compétence à sa capacité d'être ce qu'il est, mais sans déborder de la juste place qu'il peut occuper. Il est, avant tout, tenu de transmettre les connaissances consignées dans le programme de l'institut dont il fait partie. Mais ce programme, ne précise ni les modes de leurs transmissions ni les références pour les asseoir. La didactique, dans ce cas, reste artistique, cependant, il ne suffit pas toujours d'être un artiste socialement reconnu pour pouvoir être un pédagogue.

Etant dans un cadre d'atelier et non dans celui d'un cours magistral, l'enseignement n'est efficace qu'à travers une certaine maïeutique qui impliquerait directement ou indirectement l'être de l'étudiant. A travers les divers exercices, l'enseignant doit intentionnellement investir une dimension artistique appelant celui-ci à impliquer sa propre sensibilité. Si cette dimension est absente dans l'enseignement en atelier, nous risquons de le transformer en un atelier de fabrication d'objets selon une recette commune.

Il s'agit d'un encadrement individuel et à la mesure de chaque étudiant, il est adapté à sa motivation et lui permet d'agir et de réagir en prenant les différentes décisions qui ponctuent le processus de conception de formes et d'espaces dans son exercice et son projet. Ces décisions sont prises suite à l'interaction que l'étudiant effectue entre les objectifs et les consignes de l'exercice, sa perception et sa sensibilité aux références artistiques, son histoire personnelle, ses propres intentions et le discours éclairé, parfois intentionnellement perturbateur, de l'enseignant. Ici, la perturbation est, évidemment, prise au sens positif et stimulateur. Il s'agit de troubler l'étudiant pour le faire réagir et pour lui faire quitter une attitude passive, le poussant, alors à se questionner sur le comment et le pourquoi de sa perception, de son émotion et de son action.

*« L'art est fait pour troubler, non pour rassurer...  
Ce trouble ne doit pas se traduire par un rejet né  
de l'incompréhension. L'institution scolaire ne peut*

*se satisfaire de l'écart qui se creuse dangereusement  
entre le créateur contemporain et son public »*

*Georges Braque<sup>6</sup>.*

**E**n effet, en atelier, le doute ne doit pas instituer une situation déstabilisante. Dans un souci heuristique, il permet plutôt, un moment de fertilité favorisant l'étonnement et la jouissance esthétique.

Dans ses manipulations de matériaux, d'outils et de techniques graphiques et plastiques, l'étudiant apprend et desapprend à la fois. Il gère une situation d'expérimentations et de recherches personnelles et particulières qui restent chargées d'une certaine dimension esthétique. M. Merleau-Ponty disait « Il est vrai à la fois que le monde est ce que nous voyons et que, pourtant, il nous faut apprendre à le voir »<sup>7</sup>. La séance d'atelier se veut aussi comme une possibilité de liberté pour l'étudiant et une occasion de connaissance, connaissance de soi, connaissance des matériaux et connaissance du monde. En effet, le suivi doit bénéficier chaque étudiant séparément se présente comme un accompagnement dans son propre cheminement tout le long de son processus de conception. L'enseignant devient comme un guide non pas pour lui montrer un chemin, mais comme un guide pour lui en éclairer plusieurs. Et il revient à l'étudiant de s'approprier son propre cheminement au fur et à mesure qu'il avance dans son travail.

Dans un groupe d'étudiants en atelier, il y a autant de sensibilités que d'étudiants, donc autant de démarches créatrices et autant d'encadrements singuliers<sup>8</sup>. C'est dans ce sens que le comment et le quoi transmettre sont si difficiles à concevoir et encore plus à maîtriser parfaitement dans l'enseignement de la pratique artistique.

Il s'agit d'un travail sur le terrain, où le hasard ainsi que l'aptitude et les motivations de l'étudiant, jouent un rôle important. Il n'est pas possible de prévoir à l'avance les réponses à toutes les questions que poserait chacun des étudiants. Ainsi, l'efficacité de ses réponses non prévues, dépend de la qualité de l'attitude pédagogique de l'enseignant et de ses capacités d'éveil et d'écoute concernant le *faire* et le *penser* de cet étudiant. Cette attitude est similaire à l'attitude de la quête d'un artiste face au matériau. Dans ce cas, l'étudiant assimilé au matériau et l'artiste enseignant vise à lui donner l'occasion de tirer le meilleur de lui-même.

En général, l'étudiant a peur de l'aléatoire et vit souvent diverses situations de blocages au cours du processus de conception de son projet. Par un mot, une phrase ou un simple geste l'enseignant est très souvent capable de stimuler de nouveau sa perception l'aidant ainsi à se détacher de certains savoirs, certains sentiers battus et à décoller en vue de produire de l'artistique.

Par ailleurs, et dans certains cas, l'étudiant n'éprouve de jouissance esthétique et ne prend conscience réellement de l'intérêt ou de l'apport positif de son travail qu'à la fin du processus de sa réalisation. Ou encore, en ayant pris un certain recul relatif au temps et à l'espace, comme c'est le cas le jour de l'affichage de ce travail pour l'évaluation. C'est en cela que

<sup>4</sup> Cf. *Information, sensation et perception*, J-D Bagot, ed. Armand Colin, Paris 1996, p145.

<sup>5</sup> Cf. E. Souriau, *Vocabulaire d'esthétique*, éditions Quadrige Presse Universitaire de France, 1999.

<sup>6</sup> Cf. *L'artistique, arts plastiques et enseignement*, actes du colloque de Sait-Denis, ed. C.R.D.P. Académie de Créteil, 1997.

<sup>7</sup> M. Merleau-Ponty, *Le visible et l'invisible*, éd. Gallimard, Paris 1964, p. 18.

<sup>8</sup> Comme le montrent les différentes figures.

## Quelques réponses plastiques, à certaines problématiques posées, élaborées par des étudiants (niveau 1 et 3) de l'Ecole Nationale d'architecture et d'urbanisme de Tunis.

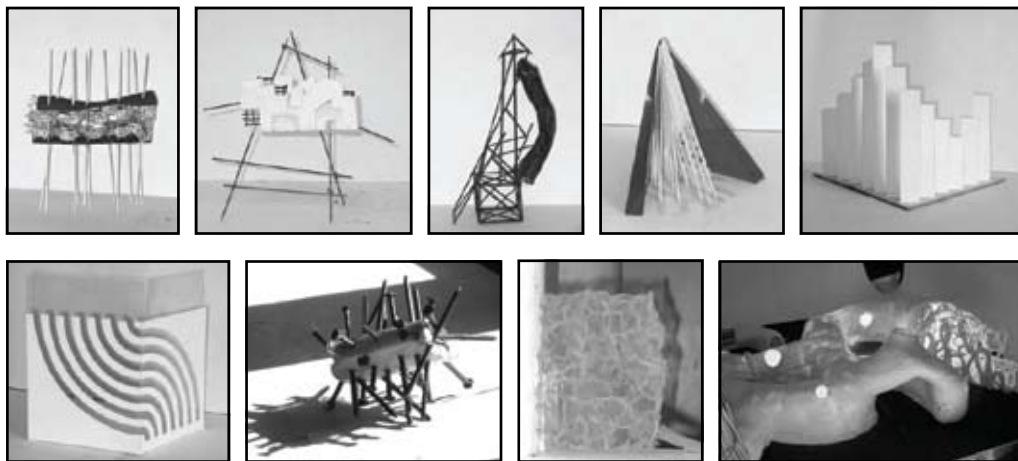


Fig. 1, Fig. 2 et Fig. 3: Regards croisés: architecture de Sidi Bou Saïd (patrimoine tunisien) et architecture Moderne et contemporaine (Le Corbusier, B. Tschumi...)

Fig. 4, Fig. 5 et Fig. 6: Manipulation de matériaux et d'outils plastiques en vue d'exprimer l'accentuation ou la destruction d'un angle.

Fig. 7, Fig. 8 et Fig. 9: A la recherche de spatialités inhabituelles et d'événements plastiques spécifiques aux matériaux

l'enseignement de l'art plastique en tant que pratique de formation peut être, en partie, assimilé à une pratique artistique.

### L'usage de la référence

Questionner la notion de référence dans l'enseignement de l'art plastique, est une façon de poser le problème des connaissances trop digérées et des réflexions utilisées comme « révérence » et non comme référence. C'est, aussi, une façon d'ouvrir un espace de dialogue, de confrontation d'idées et de croisement de regards. Le rapport au monde se passe par « co-naissance » d'événements différents et de réalités diverses. Se référencer, dans ce cas, est une façon d'être acteur, à la fois, dans sa propre histoire et dans l'histoire en général. C'est se placer dans une dimension où la dialectique entre l'objectif et le subjectif est continuellement en interaction. Être soi n'est alors possible que dans une autonomie existante à travers une relation relative entre un singulier, un pluriel.

La réponse proposée par l'étudiant comporte toujours une part reconnaissable et en référence à une situation ou à un événement plus ou moins objectif et une part qui tire sa source du subjectif, lequel n'est, d'ailleurs, jamais absolu. Ce subjectif doit son contenu et sa texture à des référents extérieurs que chaque individu a croisés tout le long de sa vie depuis son jeune âge. J-F. Soro disait « sans aucun doute le parcours, ou si l'on préfère le processus d'identité de chacun dans ses sinuosités et dans ses aspérités l'amène à se confronter à de multiples références et repères, c'est aussi ce qui génère la richesse et la complexité. En fait, penser, se penser en dehors de toute référence serait de l'ordre de l'absence à soi-même et aux autres, ce serait postuler hors de l'humain, hors de l'histoire, qu'il y a un devenir sans passé, ce serait

avoir le désir-fou, utopique et adolescent que du passé on peut faire table rase. »<sup>9</sup>

Si en usant d'une référence, le pédagogue n'insiste pas sur la relation à établir entre elle, le thème de l'exercice et l'étudiant, une relation qui favorise la critique et l'analyse, il risque de faire de l'atelier un espace de conformation plus tôt qu'un espace de formation et de transformation, qui sont les objectifs principaux de cet enseignement. Sans l'approche critique et analytique, la référence devient une déférence regardée comme un objet réifié et une connaissance visant à simplement élargir l'horizon culturel de l'étudiant. Cette approche critique crée une dynamique dans le faire de l'étudiant et constitue en lui un *lieu mental*, tout deux orchestrés par l'habileté du pédagogue à faire interagir la sensibilité de l'étudiant et le contenu de la référence. Une référence qu'il sélectionne pour nourrir et pour élargir le champ personnel de l'étudiant.

Dans un champ référentiel artistique riche et divers, tant au niveau chronologique qu'au niveau géographique touchant des civilisations différentes et des mouvements multiples: le patrimoine tunisien, l'art du XX<sup>ème</sup> siècle et l'art contemporain<sup>10</sup>. Comment amener l'étudiant à se motiver et à stimuler sa créativité, en lui évitant de tomber dans la déconstruction négative et en le poussant à déconstruire pour pouvoir, à la fois, se construire et construire son environnement ?

<sup>9</sup> Jean-François Soro « Vers une éthique de la référence : la référenciation », Dans *Arts plastiques... quelles sont vos références ?*, ed. CRDP, Créteil 2004, p. 90.

<sup>10</sup> Les traces matérielles, dans le cas de l'art contemporain, paraissent souvent plus repoussantes que réjouissantes. Ainsi, elles risqueraient de mettre l'étudiant devant l'ambiguïté à distinguer ce qui est de l'ordre de la réflexion et de l'artistique et ce qui est de l'ordre de l'abus et de la facilité.

Dans cet ordre d'idées la présence de la référence sous forme d'une image ou d'une pensée est nécessaire pour justifier ou pour permettre une assise, un point de départ ou un prétexte. Le pédagogue, dont la parole doit être dans ce cas mesurée et consciente, ne peut pas négliger la part du hasard, des rencontres fortuites et des divers croisements qui donneraient autant d'objets qu'il n'y a de sujets. Il s'agit de situer la référence à une distance juste nécessaire pour ne pas encombrer la sensibilité de l'étudiant. M. Merleau-Ponty disait « Si nulle peinture n'achève la peinture, si même nulle œuvre ne s'achève absolument, chaque création change, altère, éclaire, approfondit, confirme, exalte, recrée ou crée d'avance toutes les autres. »<sup>11</sup>

Il s'agit donc de l'organisation et de la gestion d'une articulation subtile entre la pratique plastique et la culture artistique. Malgré le caractère extravagant choquant de certaines références, elle restent cependant, un moyen de stimuler l'étudiant et de connecter son travail avec le champ artistique en général. Par ailleurs, cela permet au pédagogue d'assurer la satisfaction de l'institution, d'établir une source perpétuelle d'interrogation pédagogique et de créer un espace multiculturel favorisant l'ouverture. Le rejet ou le refus que manifeste l'étudiant pour certaines formes ou traces artistiques, semblent légitime et justifiable. Toutefois un pédagogue reste redoutable d'un travail efficace et rigoureux pour développer chez cet étudiant une capacité à percevoir le non vu, à accepter la différence et à lutter contre l'intolérance en essayant de capter ce qui, en lui, pourrait la nourrir.

E. Morin disait « Nous ne pouvons être autonomes qu'à partir d'une dépendance à l'égard d'une culture, d'un langage, à l'égard d'un savoir. L'autonomie est possible non pas en termes absolus mais en termes relationnels et relatifs. »<sup>12</sup>. Ce paradoxe mettant en relation l'autonomie et la dépendance est lisible dans la plasticité de l'être, dans sa capacité de prendre et de donner ; qu'il soit étudiant ou enseignant.

## La conception et l'élaboration du projet.

Dans l'élaboration de la réponse ou des réponses, l'étudiant passe par des moments différents et entrecroisés où sa perception, sa sensibilité et son sens de la rigueur sont mis en jeu. Il produit ainsi des esquisses : des graphiques et des expressions picturales et sculpturales visant à chaque fois à aboutir sur des éclaircissements de la question posée et sur sa motivation relative ou sur des préparations d'une éventuelle réponse, considérée comme un aboutissement possible.

En présentant son projet devant un jury, l'étudiant néglige souvent la présence de ces esquisses qu'il considère comme des brouillons non présentables et sans aucune importance. Il faudrait régulièrement insister et lui rappeler continuellement que toutes les traces plastiques qu'il réalise en relation avec l'exercice ont de l'intérêt et qu'il doit les garder, en vue de les afficher et de les soumettre à l'appréciation et à l'évaluation globale et finale du projet.

Dans ce processus de présentation, ce qui est mis en jeu c'est le trajet mental et les conduites créatrices qui accompagnent le faire et le penser de l'étudiant, lisibles à travers les différentes mises en formes plastiques qui traduisent la naissance de l'idée et de son aboutissement. Une façon de donner

à voir cette expression non verbale et saccadée qui a été vécu, en silence, depuis le commencement de l'exercice jusqu'à son aboutissement. L'étudiant doit être capable de montrer ce vécu qui constitue, dans une certaine mesure, la démarche qui lui a permis la conception formelle et spatiale de son projet, en précisant ses choix des supports et des outils de conception et de communications adaptés à l'idée et à son élaboration.

Comme il s'agit d'interroger cet étudiant sur sa capacité à saisir une problématique et à s'impliquer dans une démarche créatrice, dans ce cas, l'ordonnement des dessins, des rendus en deux ou en trois dimensions, des rendus en audiovisuel... devient comme un montage qui se construit au fur et à mesure et en conséquence. Ce montage devient le fil conducteur révélateur de l'intérêt plastique et esthétique et de la logique interne du processus d'élaboration.

## Conclusion.

En atelier, l'exercice est structuré et organisé de façon à répondre à des paramètres en relation avec une logique communicationnelle relevant de l'ordre institutionnel du contenu du programme d'enseignement. Cependant, tout cet aspect relatif à la fabrication ou à la production d'un identifié sous forme de réponse à la question posée, ne doit pas écarter tout ce qui peut advenir de l'altérité et de la sensibilité personnelle de l'étudiant fabricant et de l'enseignant l'encadrant, qui sont tous les deux incessamment invités à user de leurs connaissances techniques autant que de leurs imaginaires et de leurs conduites créatrices.

L'objectif est d'aider le jeune étudiant tunisien à prendre conscience de la spécificité de son identité en perpétuelle construction, à fructifier et à élargir sa propre culture en relation avec le patrimoine local, tout en accédant à la connaissance, à la compréhension et à l'appréciation d'œuvres telles que celles de Duchamp, celles de Buren, celles de Georges Rousse, de Frank O. Géhy ou celles de Ioh Ming Pei, et celles de bien d'autres plasticiens et architectes qui ont travaillé d'une manière singulière sur le lieu, l'espace et l'objet. Il s'agit de lui apprendre à percevoir autrement l'environnement spatial et formel qui l'entoure, pour que cet étudiant puisse établir en lui les glissements possibles entre le sensoriel et le sensuel et par conséquent, produire et créer plus tard, de l'espace architectural.

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<sup>11</sup> M. Ponty, *L'œil et l'esprit*, éd. Gallimard, Paris 1964, p. 92.

<sup>12</sup> E. Morin, *La tête bien faite*, éd. Seuil, 1999.

## CONCEPTUALIZATION OF GENDER IN VISUAL REPRESENTATIONS OF ONE'S OWN BODY WITHIN THE FEMINIST ARTISTIC PRACTICES

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In the paper I will examine, how gender as social construction and culturally produced identity has been conceptualized through visual representations of one's own body in feminist artistic practices. The basic distinction between sex and gender will be deconstructed through analyze of feminist art and visual culture to the articulations of different gender identities.<sup>1</sup> The concept of the artist's own body will be explored through different attempts to establish the status of a woman artist as an autonomous subject. The main framework of my paper will be historical-comparative and it will include representations of the body of a woman artist in several ways: from the classical self-portraits with brush and pallet or at easel; essentialist approach of emphasizing features specific to the female body (for example, features related to female sexuality, menstruation, pregnancy, abortion, birth, maternity...); to constructivist art projects repudiating any sort of representation of the female body and attempts in the lesbian and queer art to oppose the established binary structures of masculine and feminine.

However, before we enter any further discussion about the representations of the female nude, we need to take a short sidestep into the history of questioning the category of 'woman' and the notion of 'women's art'. Namely, it is very problematic to speak about art or about women artists as sexually characterized. Such notions can in fact lead to essentialism or to purely biological determinism associating women's artistic production with their biological sex. In other words, the works of women artists can hardly be united on the basis of their common 'female' characteristics.

Long since the first attempts at uniting the works of women artists on the basis of their sex, feminist theorists have started emphasizing that sexual difference is not to be understood as the function of sex with biological identity as its background, but rather as a historical construction which

is still incessantly produced, repeated and consolidated within various practices of determination.

In one of the first feminist essay "Why Have There Been No Great Women Artists?", Linda Nochlin has called to attention that no common qualities of 'femininity' would seem to link the styles of women artists generally and no subtle essence of femininity would seem to link work from Artemisia Gentileschi to contemporary women artists. She wrote: "In every instance, women artists and writers would seem to be closer to other artists and writers of their own period and outlook than they are to each other."<sup>2</sup>

Another issue that has received much attention within the last thirty years of feminist debates is the tension between women's art and feminist art, because it is highly significant to emphasize that women art is far from being feminist art. Simply put, while the notion of women art generally signifies the art, which is produced by women artists, who are biologically women, feminist art is perceived more ideologically and politically orientated because it focuses on anti-patriarchal and anti-sexist approaches. Lucy Lippard captured this when she wrote that feminist art reflects a political consciousness of what it means to be a woman in a patriarchal culture. "Feminism is an ideology, a value system, a revolutionary strategy, a way of life. ... Feminist art 'is a political position, a set of ideas about the future of the world, which includes information about the history of women and our struggles and recognition of women as a class.'"<sup>3</sup>

On the early 1970s, art made by feminist women represented a radical new beginning. If the goal of feminism was to change the nature of art itself, twenty or thirty years later, such approach was seen as utopian vision. For example, Nourma Broude and Mary D. Garrard argue, "that there is no such thing as a singular female perspective; that not all art by women is feminist, not even all art made by women who are feminists."<sup>4</sup>



<sup>1</sup> In her book *Intimate Distance: Women, Artists and the Body*, Rosemary Betterton has pointed out that the sex/gender distinction does not fit well with more recent attempts to theorize the fluid boundaries of gender and sexual identity. It is difficult to imagine a clear mapping of sex and gender differences after a decade in which transexual and transgender desires have been acknowledged and queer identity reclaimed." (Betterton, R., *An Intimate Distance: Women, Artists and The Body*, p. 15.)

<sup>2</sup> Nochlin, L., *Women, Art, and Power and Other Essays*, p. 149.

<sup>3</sup> Lippard, L. R., *The Pink Glass Swan (Selected essays on feminist art)*, p. 172.

<sup>4</sup> Broude, N. and Garrard, M. D., *The Power of Feminist Art: The American Movement of the 1970s, History and Impact*, p. 10.

However, the representation of the female nude is one of the widespread topics inside the tradition of Western art practices, the main focus in this paper will not be on the analysis of representations of the female nude within patriarchal tradition, but on the representations of women's own bodies. As Lynda Nead has shown in her work *Female Nude: Art, Obscenity and Sexuality*, the female nude is "a particularly significant motif within western art and aesthetics".<sup>5</sup> The "Nude" is for her "a territory traditionally occupied by male artists and female models: the assessor and the assessed".<sup>6</sup>

Inside the feminist art theory exists a long tradition of the critique of the female nude. From that perspective a woman has been understood as the passive object of the "male" gaze. John Berger was first, who has shown on the status of women inside the long tradition in history of art (especially inside the European oil painting). He wrote about the image convention of depicting women as objects of the gaze and men as lookers or viewers, spectators, collectors of art, owners of paintings, and spectator-owners. As nudes, women have been seen and judged as 'sights'. His classic formulation, 'men looked' and 'women appeared', became almost anthological. In *Ways of Seeing* John Berger wrote: "One might simplify this by saying: *men act* and *women appear*. Men look at women. Women watch themselves being looked at. This determines not only most relations between men and women but also the relation of women to themselves. The surveyor of woman in herself is male: the surveyed female. Thus she turns herself into an object – and most particularly as object of vision: a sight."<sup>7</sup>

Along with Berger's *Ways of Seeing*, one of the key moments in the articulation of a binary split between women as passive objects of the look, and men as active subjects of their own desires, was the theory of Laura Mulvey. In her essay "Visual Pleasure and Narrative Cinema", she wrote about images of women in classical Hollywood cinema. She used psychoanalytic concepts of "scopophilia" and "voyeurism" to purpose that the conventions of popular narrative cinema are structured by a patriarchal unconscious. She demonstrated the power of the "male gaze" through the examples, where women were represented in films as objects of the "male gaze".



While feminist theorists criticized use of the female body as an object, women artists attended to do the same through their feminist artistic practice. They tried to go beyond the status of passive objects and attempted to establish the active and creative artistic subjects through the representations of their own bodies. In order to understand this shift in theory and practice the examination of the women's self-portraits is of great value.

Through the whole history of fine arts, self-portrait has been one of the most frequent motives of women artists; in fact, it offers to the artist, more than any other genre, the possibility of questioning her own identities and her subjectivity. Through the very process of self-portraying,

women artists were able to establish themselves as subjects. In the internal relation specific to self-portrait, the artist is at the same time the model, assuming the double role of the portrayer and the portrayed, the observer and the observed, the signifier and the signified, the subject and the object in one person.

In this paper the concept of the female body is explored through the diversity of feminist art practices using the broad range of media – from more traditional ones such as painting, sculpture and graphic art to the more contemporary artistic practices such as installation, performance art, photography, video and other new media. This research is a comparative analysis of the politic of identities which are 'inscribed into' the body of a woman artist in various representations, which I sort out in three main categories:

- 1) The classical self-portraits with brush and pallet or at easel
- 2) The specific female body
- 3) The lesbian body

## **1.) THE CLASSICAL SELF-PORTRAITS WITH BRUSH AND PALLET OR AT EASEL:**

Through the genre of classical self-portrait, I analyze the examples of women professional painters from the sixteenth century (from Sofonisba Anguissola, for example, who painted one of the longest known series of self-portraits) to our time, who had attempted to establish the status of a woman artist as an autonomous subject.

## **2.) THE SPECIFIC FEMALE BODY:**

Here I examine images of the artist's body that explore specific areas of female experience which had previously been ignored, for example, features related to female sexuality, menstruation (Judy Chicago, Eclipse), pregnancy (Paula Modersohn-Becker, Gillian Melling), abortion (Frida Kahlo), birth (Cecile Walton), maternity (Melita Vovk)... These images are labeled as essentialist approach that emphasizes features specific to the female body and therefore signified as 'biological essentialism'. This is in contradiction to those who insist that femininity is socially and historically constructed. While the popularity of these images was evident among women, many feminists, especially anti-essentialists from poststructuralist heritage were wary of them.

Because of that I analyze also the examples of "the un-represented body", which represent the opposite approaches of essentialist representations of the specific female body. The focus here is on the constructivists (anti-essentialist) art projects repudiating any sort of representation of the female body (the best example of the un-represented body is the project *Post-Partum Document* by Mary Kelly).

Through this category, I analyze also the images of the artist's "pathological body" that expose 'taboo' themes of violence (for example, Ana Mendieta, Aprilija Lužar), ageing (Alice Neel), illness and death (Frida Kahlo, Hannah Wilke, Jo Spence, Nancy Fried). Another aspect I research in this section are the images of the artist's body that deconstruct embedded masculine values, for example, dominant ideas of beauty. Some artists emphasize the materiality of the female body as a critique of the male objectifying gaze and related systems of institutionalized control (Janny Saville).

<sup>5</sup> Nead, L., *The Female Nude: Art, Obscenity and Sexuality*, p. 2.

<sup>6</sup> Ibidem, p. 86.

<sup>7</sup> Berger, J., *Ways of Seeing*, p. 47.

### 3.) THE LESBIAN BODY:

In this section I examine the attempts in the lesbian and queer art to oppose the established binary structures of masculine and feminine through the concepts of visual transvestism, masquerade and drag king performances. I analyze a wide range of non-normative gender(s) and sexualities within the visual arts: for instance gender variations like female masculinity, transgenderism, transsexualism.

The repressed lesbian body has become an important site within feminist art practice for acknowledging difference. However, there are very few examples of artworks on the feminist or lesbian topic, especially on the local Slovenian artistic scene. For that reason, it is necessary to include more examples of so-called global art production, although this means mostly from Western cultural tradition.

On the other hand, lesbian and gay studies as well as queer theory (especially lesbian feminists, for example, Judith Butler, Teresa de Lauretis, Monique Wittig) bring to the field of feminist theory a new point of view about the category of woman, about the notions of female and feminine, about the distinction between sex and gender and about different gender identities. The best example of this was Monique Wittig's radical and almost anthological statement that lesbian is not a woman.



Through this paper, I tried to present some of feminist art practices where it has become obvious, how and in which way the visual representations of one's own body stand in the opposition to the patriarchal or even heterosexist social order. Through the politics of representation I tried to show, how feminist artists use images of the body in order to make visible a range of their identities, connected not only to sex, gender(s) and sexuality, but also to ageing, nationality, race and class.

From that perspective the most relevant are examples of those authors, who initiate new dialogues with feminist theory and introduce the issues of sex, gender and sexual difference within their art works. The art by authors who have been successful in crossing the gender binary structures could animate the interdisciplinary concerns with gender and politics of identities in general. At the same time, I would like to stimulate new theoretical discussion of social visibility, presence and distinctiveness of marginalized identities (feminist, lesbian, queer) and promote their political affirmation in the socio-cultural and artistic world.

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## SEASHORE SUICIDE IN VIEW OF MEMORY, REPRESENTATION AND IDENTITY

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There is almost no doubt that such a record as photography or film represents a powerful means of verification of memory in almost any respect: historical, collective, and even individual or psychological. However, through the accumulation of various modes of audiovisual recordings – no matter what kind of objects we can think of, a memory, which is “stored” in various media (photographs, films, tapes, disks, etc.), becomes more complex as it becomes increasingly inaccessible in its totality. With regards, especially to film and other forms of audiovisual presentation, such presentation in a sense, “objectify” memory. However, there are many multiplying levels of reality and therefore memory itself becomes open and vulnerable to manipulation. Nevertheless, due to all circumstances, memory as it is “materialised” in film, is unavoidably constructed.

In the midst of these time-images and time-space, which are inhabited by memory, the notion of identity is formed. This notion thus, brings us closer to the realm of culture since identity acquires its relevance in relation to the notion of difference. Each film is in one way or another related to these notions, which form its basic grammar. Since each instance of identity is a product of some course or process of identifying activity (or similarities of code and conduct within a cultural context), which works through the differences towards recognising something or someone as being the same as it- or him or herself, the movement of representation, such as in the case of a film, enters the process of identifying. This is the point, where the aspect of aesthetics plays a big role.

### Identity with a difference

As the bourgeois class society developed new forms of representation of a socially constructed reality, and as it determined a special place and role for aesthetic practices (usually known as art) in this reality, identity became a denominator of a lot of different uses and meanings. On the other hand, the term itself lost its “innocence” due to complex impacts of new forms of representation, which (as a necessary intellectual addition) contributed to the reproduction of the public. The role of photography and film in this sense was immense. Maybe we could say today that film after a period of developing different formats

in different registers reached a point when we could almost determine subjectivity (in a psychological or sociological sense) in the social reality as a kind of “representation of representation,” meaning that the “real subjectivity” represents an imagined or a conceptual representation of subjectivity. In any case, in the age of television and digitalisation images, gestures, recognition patterns, representations of bodies and so on, are all bringing us closer to such consequences. However, as much as such suppositions seem intellectually attractive, they should not be taken too far, but they should serve as an indication of some of the complex effects of audio-visual production, which is woven in the fabric of society. Here we are talking, of course, about symbolic exchanges within any society. Therefore, there is no doubt that the identity in the framework of culture by and large functions as a recognition scheme, within which the audio-visual production provides many particular views, angles, objects, gazes, suggestions and so forth, which modify ways of seeing things and also ways of “being seen.” And it should be added that the instance of “being seen” involves the *being* as such, which is the category of existence and of the existentialist philosophy.

Lacan's theory of gaze, that was developed in his most quoted seminar, can be quite helpful for comprehending the extent of this. Lacan's explanation of a little incident from his youth with a fisherman Petit-Jean has some methodological value for what we are trying to say here. Petit-Jean's claim that the can glittering on the surface of the water “doesn't see you!” as we know, engaged Lacan's thinking quite a lot: “To begin with, if what Petit-Jean said to me, namely, that the can did not see me, had any meaning, it was because in a sense, it was looking at me, all the same. It was looking at me at the level of the point of light, the point at which everything that looks at me is situated – and I am not speaking metaphorically.” (Lacan. 1979, p. 95) Why Lacan finds it necessary and, actually, so prominent to stress that he “wasn't speaking metaphorically?” Taking into account his relation with the group of fishermen, what we can characterise as a culturally structured situation, Lacan demonstrates how the subject, in a “form” of Lacan himself in this case, is thrown out of picture. Although in this chapter Lacan isn't concentrating on identity, the process, if I may say so, of gazing and especially being seen by the objects, could be apprehended as a kind of a process of identi-

fiyng. Here we cannot but evoke one of the most impertinent and beautiful *finales* in film history, namely the end of Godard's film *Pierrot le fou* (1965), in which the Belmondo character commits a very bizarre suicide at the sea shore. As the cords of dynamite sticks, that he wraps abundantly around his head explode, and the subject goes up in smoke, camera turns toward the setting sun on the line of seas' horizon. It's the intense light of this final shot, accompanied by Rimbaud's verses<sup>1</sup>, which bear a resemblance to the scene of Lacan's vision of a vision. The difference between Belmondo and Lacan was only this that the Belmondo character took the absence of the metaphor very seriously, and so he vanished into the light of the very bright sun. Lacan only recognizes the disappearance of subjectivity, Pierrot submits himself to the disappearance from the picture. Therefore, we can imagine Lacan as a viewer of this Godard's film nodding approvingly to Godard's perceptive visualisation of the productivity in a form of destructiveness of the identifying process. At the end of this we find nothing less than the obliteration of subject, not in just metaphorical terms, as Lacan very importantly remarked.

**T**he very notion of identity opens a field, where we encounter a number of relevant meanings as far as films, which we have in mind, are concerned. These meanings, needless to say, cannot be perceived out of context, which is always historical. "History and identity are probably the two amongst those concepts, with which the influence of hundred years of cinema could be assessed." (Elsaesser 1996, p. 52)<sup>2</sup> The recent international theoretical discussion on a correlation between cinema and history, brought up quite clearly a definitive realisation about the impossibility of recent history to avoid a deep impact of film. History is remembered, and it therefore exists through images, which were unavoidably taken at a certain point in time, and so in turn the point in time becomes an image open to interpretation, which always integrates the time-image in the context of a present. Without elaborating such complex assertions much further, we can claim that the European cinema in its most "articulated" products particularly reflected this correlation, in which the present is the point of becoming and vanishing of identity as it is produced and destroyed in the processes of identifying. We could determine the roots of our understanding these processes in the classical European thinking, which is best represented by Fichte's effort to formulate an absolutely free subject, who reproduces himself in a form of his famous *das Ich*. The identity is a dynamic category of a productive subjective activity, through which differences that are in many respects defined as cultural attributes, contribute to the self-recognition of the subject in the process of forming the identity. In this activity the subject triumphs over history as well, or in other words, the (abstract) subject's freedom is manifested also in his freedom from the determinations of history. However, this triumph happens to be an illusory imposition of the subject: history, as a rule, strikes back in a form of "events." In any case, films reacted to a correlation with history especially through their reflexive approach to identity. The notion of identity concerns a number of its enunciations that touch upon philosophical subjectivity, psychological subject, an ethnic entity, the political agent, and so on. All these different aspects of identity, which are naturally in most cases, but not necessarily so, inscribed in constructions of fictional characters, are manifested in films from different periods of cinematography.

## Suicide at the Adriatic

As in most other Central and Eastern European countries, which were liberated from Nazism in a flame of socialist revolutions, also in Yugoslavia, film production developed relatively quickly thanks to a high degree of support by new revolutionary authorities. In any case Yugoslav cinematography eventually developed in many respects as the strongest film production in the Balkans. The initial period after the second world war was marked by a sub-genre of the war genre, namely so called partisan movies, and a number of adaptations of the local canonised literature and drama for screening. Especially the latter sort of films, which were mostly *a priori* supposed to bear an "artistic value," could be studied nowadays as an expression of tendencies to form a cinematic version of identity aiming at the collective aspect, the so called national (ethnic) self image. Hence, we can say that in a quite early period of the socialist Yugoslavia the constitutive parts – federal republics, which were founded on the ethnic principle – worked upon some aspects of their traditional, cultural and ethnic distinctions in film, as they did it as well in the other art forms in spite of the so called internationalist political and ideological rhetoric. Each of the federal republics was autonomous in its cinematic as well as all other cultural endeavours. Not all of these films could be easily dismissed regarding their aesthetics, cinema craftsmanship or sophistication, but nevertheless, they predominantly represented a pre-modern view of film in tune with signifiers of a belated romantic vision of the ethnic identity and occasionally with "obligatory" class messages. A matter of a discussion of another kind is a question on how much these Yugoslav movies could be contextualised in view of the post-socialist tragedy of the country.<sup>3</sup> But, in between there was a period, when it seemed that a new urban culture, which transcended the attributes of an exclusivist ethnic identity, was emerging in this multi-cultural Balkan republics. Many cases of films could be found in almost all Yugoslav republics that in many respects shared a similar aesthetic codes and modernist views as some other European films at the time. But let me bring up my point by briefly presenting just one film: Sand Castle (*Peščeni grad* – 1962) by Boštjan Hladnik, the *enfant terrible* of the Slovene cinema.

**I**n the sixties the Slovene cinema made first most recognisable and serious moves towards a modernist approach in film-making. As recently deceased director of the Slovenian cinemathèque Silvan Furlan remarked in his article for a special issue of the review *Ekran*, dedicated to the celebration of the 100<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Slovene film: "[The Slovene film] gained importance as the mass culture and as art as well. Why should our film be anything special in this regard? But it is certainly very special for our culture and art – it visibly co-created and it still co-creates an image of ourselves." (Furlan 2005, p. 42) The period of late modernism, in which a part of film production in Slovenia went on dutifully screening "national" myths and canonised literature, brought about also some of the most important films in Slovenia so far. Boštjan Hladnik contributed quite a big share of them. The film *Peščeni grad* maybe isn't Boštjan Hladnik at his best, but still the film very well represents his role in the history of Slovene cinema. Already with his first movie *Dancing in the Rain* (*Ples v dežju* – 1961) Hladnik introduced the aesthetics of modernity in the cinema of Slovenia. And he did so very

much so that the film's meaning still remains rather impenetrable and ambiguous for most average viewers. Although the *Dancing In the Rain* immediately gained high acclaim among the cultured audiences, it looks like that Hladnik maybe felt a need to come closer to a less sophisticated moviegoers. The result was in many respects not much less accomplished film, which is in view of a presentation of an identity problem much more transparent than the first Hladnik's film. As in the *Sand Castle* (which is a sort of a road movie or maybe more precise: off road movie) there is not much of a story, we just get a lot of fragments, which emit double messages of joy and anxiety. The story of the film begins in the city (home audiences of course recognise the capital Ljubljana), where one of the lead characters, named Ali, feels bad due to his failure at the university exams. So after a quarrel with his girl friend he hits the road in his *deux chevaux*, which was a quite popular car in Slovenia at the time. On his way out of the city he first takes in his car a hitch hiker named Smokey, and finally a secretive girl Milena. The three then travel to the sea, later they drive on cart tracks and totally off any road looking for a deserted beach. They find such beach and they spend their time there playing, bathing. Some hints about a love triangle are given but not much follows from it; it looks like that Milena is falling in love with the both boys, but the story doesn't develop much further in any resolution of the love triangle. At the end Milena jumps from a sea cliff. For two of the three main roles in the film Hladnik engaged a pair of Serbian actors Milena Dravić and Ljubiša Samardžić, who became highly popular for their role in Branko Bauer's comedy about life in so called "youth labour brigades" *Prekobrojna* (since there is no official English title this could be translated as "Over the Number"), which was shot in the same year just before Hladnik shot his movie. The pair of young actors represented already in the *Prekobrojna*, what seemed to be a much desired nascent Yugoslav identity. Hladnik made use of the two actor's image of a young couple looking for "joys of life." However Hladnik's film isn't any comedy in spite of the fact that what seems to be a love triangle is interwoven with many comic situations. On the other hand at the same time the characters fall over and over again in bursts of unmotivated laughter, which becomes more understandable only at the end of the film. Joy and playfulness of the youths, who could have been just of any nationality or ethnic origin, is, as it seems in the carefully chosen moments, punctured by unexplainable relapses of the main female character in weird conditions of sudden fear and sorrow. So, Hladnik throughout the movie hints at some emptiness in a subjectivity, which makes the identity of characters quite ambivalent. At the end the trauma is revealed in a quite abrupt way. The explanation, which is given at the end of the movie, seems even too explicit and it is somehow not in tune with otherwise generally "*nouvelle vague*" kind of atmosphere of the film. Nevertheless, the film is one of the first Yugoslav films, which reflects the emerging urban middle class and new values of a cosmopolitan part of the younger generation at the time. If we talk on a different level about this film, we should be reminded of Godard and his *Pierrot le fou*, that happened to be shot three years later than Hladnik's "Castle." Hladnik's film is one of those black and white films, which gives an impression to a viewer that he has seen colours in the film. As *Pierrot le fou* also *Peščeni grad* is throughout the whole

film permeated by very bright light, which in an inexplicit way suggests the instance of "being seen" for the characters. And as the Godard's hero vanishes into the light at the end of the film, so does Hladnik's Milena; only she vanishes from a high rock above the angry sea waves. But the effect of vanishing is still the same in its suggestion of the non-metaphorical blunt standpoint on the subject's identity, which is in the Lacanian view a tool of a production of subjectivity, which never can establish itself outside of a constant threat between desire and the total loss. At the end of Hladnik's film viewers are told by a doctor from a psychiatric hospital that the traumatised girl was born in the concentration camp. So the character of the girl stands for an identity problem of the whole generation of the modernist period. However, nowadays, we can recognise Hladnik's intuition that – maybe even unknowingly – got an insight into the destructive potential of such identity's construction. What seemed for years as a too explicit explanation of the subject's trauma in the film, cannot be interpreted today without any association to the concentration camps of the war in Bosnia, which functioned in the social imaginary of many ex-Yugoslavs as an upsurge of hidden forces of history. Therefore, as we know, after the political turmoil's in 1989, that changed the map of Europe, the theme of identity emerged in a new context.

#### (ENDNOTES)

- <sup>1</sup> Verses were taken from Rimbaud's poem *L'Éternité* (May 1872), which starts and finishes with this "dialogic" stanza: "Elle est retrouvée./Quoi ? – L'Éternité. C'est la mer alée/ Avec le soleil."
- <sup>2</sup> I translated this quotation from the Slovene translation of the text. So, the responsibility for the meaning of the statement is at least in part mine.
- <sup>3</sup> The notion of alienation was largely used at the time in the intellectual discourses of existentialism and in some trends within the New Left, especially those, which were discovering the "young Marx" and which worked with ideas of the critical theory of the Frankfurt school. The term alienation itself could be a starting point for taking a deconstructive view of the period.
- <sup>4</sup> The marginalisation as a critical and sociological concept, that also addressed the problem of identity of individuals in the context of the social order has been developed.
- <sup>5</sup> In my view a research along such lines would shed some additional light on many reasons for fierceness of the ethnic conflicts in the Balkans after 1990.

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## PHILOSOPHY AFTER THEORY: ON THE CERTAINTY AND UNCERTAINTY OF PHILOSOPHICAL PRODUCTIONS

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Philosophy can also be interpreted as material *production*, namely an opinion based on belief in philosophical tradition or philosophical history as well as an opinion based on the traditionally and historically presented concepts, terms and methods of *pure philosophy* outside and beyond everyday life. Philosophers who assume that belief in philosophy is a condition of philosophy build *certain discourses and procedures* of philosophically derived narratives and argumentation within a debate, which also means deriving clichés and jargon, opinions, speeches and writing within and about philosophy. For example, modern and enlightened assumptions about philosophy as of an ordered protocol about autonomous thinking by Kant, Schelling and Hegel proved to be certain philosophies. *Certain philosophy* can be denoted as thinking, speech and writing that serve to apologetically or critically affirm traditional, historical or current philosophy as recognizable and autonomous discipline with all its spans, achievements and, certainly, its hegemonies. The certainty of a philosopher can be understood as his/her positioning in philosophy as practice, institution or profession and then expecting a philosophical question and answer in the way it is put or assumed by philosophical tradition. The term 'certainty' does not denote validity in instrumental sense or truthfulness in epistemological sense, namely, the truth in metaphysical sense but a philosophical inclination that 'validity' and 'truthfulness' of philosophical arguments supporting an assertion should be confirmed on the basis of the relationship between the recalling of philosophical tradition and the history of derivation of philosophical protocols.

For example, Martin Heidegger is the philosopher of the *philosophy that presents itself* as the one which has a certain philosophical foundation and thinking of philosophy and the philosophical. He designed almost each of his papers and lectures in such a way that would confirm his opinion within philosophy as *philosophical thinking directed through* philosophical tradition towards the source of philosophy in the *Greek power of deriving abstract concepts by means of surpassing the individuality of everyday examples*. The demand for constant and recurring founding of philosophy as the philosophy within philosophy is essentially fundamentalist. It is *philosophical fundamentalism* since pure philosophy is seen as the confirmation of the foundation of the philosophical and, consequently, the final reach of thinking in techno-procedural

and metaphysical sense.<sup>1</sup> Martin Heidegger draws attention to the importance of philosophical tradition and specifically to the original one: the tradition of founding the philosophical, namely, the metaphysical in the assumed Greek thinking as an unconditional beginning. His 'poetic' suggestiveness is not only the recalling of the *philosophical source*, but also understanding philosophy as *certain* only if it is itself traditionally constructed in the sense of an assumed *project* or an *allegory* of Greek thinking. It could be said that 'Greek thinking' as a criterion of certainty is established as a protocol in all philosophical thinking and, above all, in German philosophical tradition and its areas of influence.

Nadežda Čaćinović in her essay "Benjamin, the treatise writer" introduces and emphasises the concept of uncertainty referring to the works of German philosopher Walter Benjamin. She points out: "Here, uncertainty does not denote philosophical irrelevance but only the consequence of the exposed, direct, unprotected, we could even say stupid, confrontation with the fact that all those who are in one way or another involved in philosophy have to deal with, and that is with the experience of 'insufficiency of theory in relation to the mundane multiplicity of meaning and the multifaceted nature of phenomena', with the experience of a deadly grasp of generalisation, reduction and levelling not longer protected by the Platonist heritage".<sup>2</sup> In other words, this instructive commentary focuses on the questions as to what happens with philosophy when it no longer refers to the clearly visible tradition of the Greek (for example, the Platonist) heritage but to the individualised and modernised speech of philosophers in the midst of the multiplicity of meaning of the contemporary world? If we pose this problem of 'uncertainty', then we pose a question, from Benjamin to Wittgenstein and from Nietzsche through Heidegger to Lyotard, Derrida, Foucault or Deleuze, about the *drama of direct survival* of great issues or themes or genres or protocol structures of concepts and terms from philosophical heritage, above all, the projection of philosophical heritage as authentic source and transmission of values, meaning, and significance of Greek tradition. There, indeed, starts the drama of the 'uncertainty' and 'failure' of the assumed source and accordingly the condition of philosophical tradition as philosophy and tradition as the conditions of derivation of protocols of philosophical pro-

<sup>1</sup> Martin Heidegger, "Polazište zasnivanja metafizike", in *Kant i problem metafizike*, NIRO 'Mladost', Beograd, 1979, p. 15.

<sup>2</sup> Nadežda Čaćinović (2004), "Benjamin, the treatise writer", in *Parvulla Aesthetica*, Antibarbarus, Zagreb, 2004, p. 95.

cedures of argumentation. What in Benjamin points out to 'uncertainty' is the confrontation with the limits of philosophical *doxa* as a general belief that philosophy is usually presented as science in the manner that nullifies the power of philosophy to present or to evoke/suggest or to provoke our knowledge within the complexity of life.<sup>3</sup> Benjamin positions philosophical discourse as a collection of individual *floating narratives* and their functions as examples to present and suggest the critical problem of historical or modern subjectivity within culture and society.

Italian aesthetician and philosopher Giorgio Agamben is not a philosopher/theoretician with antiphilosophical approach but is, on the contrary, dedicated and acerbic, philologically oriented philosopher who on the inconsistent maps of the Heideggerian reading, critical theory and postlacanian psychoanalysis<sup>4</sup> demonstrates the problem of heterogeneity, hybridity, and discontinuity<sup>5</sup> of Western, classical Greek and Roman philosophical tradition. In his book *The Idea of Prose*, which is constructed as a collection of concise philosophical narratives and quotations, Agamben commits a seeming offence in relation to the critical philosophical work of interpretation in order to show that once repeated uncertainty of the fragmentation of philosophical narrative becomes new or different philosophical certainty. The repeated uncertainty of the fragmented narrative – which resembles Benjamin's antiphilosophical writing in place of philosophical speech – gives the impression of wanting to show something else, different from modern provocation of the great tradition of classical philosophical process as the quest for wisdom. With assurance and in scientifically supreme manner, Agamben recalls European philosophical tradition of *relating a narrative with the point* as a projection from the past into the insecurity of synchronic comparisons of individual and localised short speeches on behalf of the 'case' of life itself (love, happiness, music, childhood, glory, death, narration, etc). Agamben's narratives are offences of the Benjamin's offences and, therefore, show not only the visible but also the hidden face of philosophy.<sup>6</sup> Agamben projects the positioned diachronic narratives of Western philosophical and humanistic tradition into the discursive field of synchronic traces, thus laying stress on the logics of discontinuity, which are constitutive affirmations of the tradition of philosophical process. It turns out that the tradition of philosophy is not a non-problematic tradition, but the tradition of the 'states of emergency' which at the same time question and determine philosophical tradition, and that, without doubt, in the European sense of the history of philosophy. For Agamben, that history/tradition is the 'text' of philosophical reading, which constitutes an *event*, or evoking of the 'state of emergency', or 'movement'<sup>7</sup> which represents the potentiality of the 'thinking about' and 'thinking in'. For that reason, Agamben, as someone who is familiar with the teaching of Jacques Lacan's theoretical psychoanalysis, does not see the certainty and uncertainty of philosophy as 'characteristics' of thinking or of the identification of the effects of thinking but as *building*, which takes place around the place of safe uncertainty and that is the *Lacanian Real*.

In academic circles, philosophers like Jean-Francois Lyotard, Jacques Derrida, Michel Foucault or Gilles Deleuze were long

considered as *uncertain philosophers* in the twofold meaning of uncertainty: 1) as uncertain philosophers in relation to the usual philosophical jargon, themes and solutions of Western tradition and 2) as uncertain philosophers in relation to institutional placements of *non-pure* philosophical practices according to 'pure philosophy' in its ideal traditional sense. These philosophers constructed completely different philosophical discourses, which are outside the usual field of academic philosophy but with the distinctive and pronounced emphasis that it is, nevertheless, philosophy. Certain of their works<sup>8</sup> were not formally, procedurally or in protocol similar to the works, which are according to habit or *canon* of academic philosophy assumed to be models for the creation of philosophical works and expressions of philosophical discourse. Previously mentioned philosophers used the possibility of hybrid discourse, poly-genre writing, and constructed 'individual' non-systemic problematisations of incomparable examples of knowledge, representations of knowledge, and interpretation starting from scientific explanation through institutional and cultural interpretations to textual production in specific cultural practices. On the other hand, they also wrote works that were explicit positioning of philosophy as *canonical symptoms*. This ambivalence is seen as the potentiality of late-modernist diversion from 'pure philosophy' as ideal and internal unity in posing problems, themes, narratives, protocols, and procedures of opinion concerning derivation issues of hybrid philosophical strategies about philosophy and philosophical tactics within it or, even, those outside of philosophy in the very unnatural naturalness of writing (*écriture*). Philosophy, therefore, is not a collection of thoughts or representatives of different ways of thinking but a collection of *traces*. According to Derrida, it is there that the production of a *new concept of writing* occurs. The *new concept of writing* is determined by the ideas of difference and distinctions of traces in the language game. The game of difference presupposes syntheses and directions, which forbid that at any given moment, in any sense, some *simple* element be *present* by itself and directed to itself. Derrida is totally explicit when he says that *whether we speak about the order of oral or of written speech none of its elements can function as a sign without directing to some other element that simply is not present by itself*.<sup>9</sup> Every element is built from traces of other elements belonging to the chain or the system. The process of making a chain, this tissue, is the *text*, produced only in the transformation of some other text. Philosophy can be seen as a practice of textual relationships that are not simple pictures of thoughts but represent artificial constructions anticipating and suggesting potentiality for thoughts /thinking. Redirection of attention from *philosophy as thinking to philosophy as writing* can be understood as a demand for deconstruction of the stable architecture of Western philosophy. Who can move *straight* to philosophy when a *winding path* appears and we don't know where it leads, when a fly unsuccessfully fights to find a way out of a bottle, when the thought fades from a text, which is a ruin of the embankment/dispersion of words separated from thoughts? It is as if philosophy couldn't exist without *indirect moves* or *representatives* in relation to what it 'seeks' and 'finds': literature, music, painting or anything else: fashion, everyday life, boredom, food, sex, prison, mental hospital, entertainment, loneliness, etc? In order to be able to move straight to 'something', philosophy should carry out a lot

<sup>3</sup> Walter Benjamin, "Spoznajno kritički predgovor", in *Porijeklo njemačke Zalobne igre*, Veselin Maslesa, Sarajevo, 1989, p. 12.

<sup>4</sup> Giorgio Agamben, *Stanzas – Word and Phantasm in Western Culture*, University of Minnesota Press, Minneapolis, 1993.

<sup>5</sup> Giorgio Agamben, *Potentialities – Collected Essays in Philosophy*, Stanford University Press, Stanford CA, 1999.

<sup>6</sup> Giorgio Agamben, *Ideja proze*, AGM, Zagreb, 2004, p. 101.

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<sup>9</sup> Jacques Derrida (1993), "Semiologija i gramatologija (Razgovor sa Julijom Kristevom)", in *Razgovori*, Književna Zajednica, Novi Sad, 1993, p. 25.

of revisions concerning the 'rights on philosophy' by protocols, namely, by differentiating and discriminating protocols:

- a) Game: refusal of scientific function in the name of arbitrary combining of possibilities in life activities,
- b) Rhetoric: showing the skill of arranging multilayered traces/ figures of speech: changing symbols into metaphors and metaphors into allegories of *displaying the non-displayable*, and
- c) Pure philosophy: thinking separately from writing or thinking reflected in writing or thinking that becomes the 'memory' of writing (filling up, depositing and layering deleted traces) of what it is outside of it.

It can be concluded that Jacques Derrida solves the dilemma concerning 'certainty or uncertainty' of philosophy by pointing out that the relationship of *certainty* or *uncertainty* is a strategic and tactical demand with consequences and not the current or achieved *state of philosophy*, since philosophy is not the state of mind but incessant differentiation of inscribed traces: writing and reading.

The previous debate about 'certainty' and 'uncertainty' of philosophy was led by questioning the 'status of philosophy' as a metaphysical protocol about knowledge, as a tradition of knowledge, as an institution and a discourse of knowledge, as a protocol and a platform of thinking, speaking, and writing about knowledge, as a genre in writing, etc ... Posing questions about 'certainty' or 'uncertainty' of philosophy stems from distrust:

- in the certainty of knowledge as a metaphysical premise about the pure knowledge outside individual conditions of the current world,
- In the certainty of knowledge as safe and lasting tradition or in 'smoothly running communication channel',
- in the certainty of knowledge as institution and discourse of limiting and founding competences for the access to the representation of knowledge,
- in the certainty of knowledge as a protocol and a platform for deriving safe knowledge, and
- in the certainty of knowledge as a privileged genre of thinking, speaking and writing.

And from here, generally speaking, can be derived three, roughly assumed, protocols for deriving 'distrust' in philosophy and philosophical legitimacy of safe and pure knowledge.

Firstly, it is assumed that knowledge is not certain, that understanding is historically and culturally specific, that social processes are the basis of knowledge and that knowledge and social action are inseparably connected. This attitude is, very roughly speaking, the position of social constructivism.<sup>10</sup> From the position of social constructivism, philosophy is not seen as a legitimate platform of safe and pure knowledge but as a socially, culturally, and historically determined institution whose discursive work serves to set possible platforms, protocols, and procedures of presenting knowledge, which is, nevertheless, the function or consequence of surrounding social, cultural or historic conditioning. If this position is further radicalised, it can be said that scientific facts are not discovered but invented. Their usefulness for science, theory, and philosophy depends on the common perception of 'facts', namely, the determination of 'certainty' by consensus/contract and by determination of their usefulness for certain social purposes.

Secondly, it is assumed that the knowledge of philosophy is legitimate and privileged insofar as the *pure knowledge* given by protocols, which can form individual social, cultural, and historical knowledge into the shape of general, abstract, and therefore trans-

social, trans-cultural, and trans-historical presentation of knowledge as the ideal criterion for every other individual knowledge.<sup>11</sup> Legitimacy and privilege of the *pure knowledge* is determined according to the criteria that are set as:

- metaphysical, for example, the issue of truth, then,
- traditional, for example, the issue on traditional philosophical and non-philosophical themes, protocols, and procedures, as well as of
- protocol nature, for example, suggesting the protocols of empirical, logical, or sceptical way of philosophical derivation of the procedures of thinking, speaking, and writing.

The schedule positioned in this way shows that philosophical *pure knowledge* is assumed as autonomous in relation to individual knowledge of social practices, and by the same fact as referential criterion for all individual knowledge determined by social practices.

Thirdly, it is assumed that there must exist for every kind of knowledge and, therefore, for philosophical knowledge as well, an outside criterion of 'reality', setting the limit of philosophical thinking, speech, and writing which can be checked. It is assumed that there is a 'world', independent from the protocols of human mind/thinking, theories, and interpretation. A philosopher and a theoretician is a *realist* if he/she thinks that the theories he/she accepts relate to something existing, namely, that they possess factual reference.<sup>12</sup> Philosophical realism is, first of all, established after the model of *positive* scientific platforms of interpretation of the existing world. Contrary to pro-scientific realism defined in this way, it is possible to perceive influential conceptions of the Lacanian theoretical psychoanalysis, starting from the concept of the 'real' as of *that*, which eludes all symbolisation. In other words, the 'real'<sup>13</sup> is in the most primary sense *crude pre-symbolic reality* or, then, *trauma is real* in the sense of that real being a hard core that defies the process of symbolising.<sup>14</sup> However, the paradox of the Lacanian Real<sup>15</sup> lies in the fact that *that* does not exist in the sense of a 'realistically existing object', namely, the object which occupies a place in reality, but at the same time, possesses a string of characteristics and results in certain structural consequences so that this object can produce a series of critical effects in the symbolic reality of the subject. It is also possible to see here one of the *most exciting* concepts of the confrontation between negative *certainty* and necessary *uncertainty* within the contemporary philosophy and theory, which shows that the *Lacanian Real* is at the same time a theoretical and a philosophical construct within theoretical psychoanalysis as well as *that* around which it is constituted, but also through which every symbolic system falls apart. That's why the Lacanian Real is not a realist<sup>16</sup> conception of reality but a theory about the fact that there is something potentially 'dangerous', 'destructive', and 'negative' in the midst of reality, but which is indispensable so that symbolic reality could persist as *reality in danger*.

\* Translated into English by Dragana Starcevic.

<sup>11</sup> Imanuel Kant, *Kritika čistost uma*, BIGZ, Beograd, 1990; G. V. F. Hegel, *Fenomenologija duha*, BIGZ, Beograd, 1974; Martin Heidegger, *Bitak i vrijeme*, Naprijed, Zagreb, 1988.

<sup>12</sup> Jose Lopez, Garry Potter (eds.), *After Postmodernism – An Introduction to Critical Realism*, Continuum, London, 2001.

<sup>13</sup> Jacques Lacan, "RSI", *Ornicar?* No. 6, Paris, 1976.

<sup>14</sup> Slavoj Žižek, "Antagonizam kao realno", in "Koji je subject realnog", in *Sublimni objekt ideologije*, Arkzin, Zagreb, 2002, p. 219.

<sup>15</sup> Slavoj Žižek, "Antagonizam kao realno", p. 220.

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<sup>10</sup> Vivijen Ber, *Uvod u socijalni konstrukcionizam*, Zepter Book World, Beograd, 2001.

## TRACES OF THE PERFORMATIVE TURN IN CONTEMPORARY THEATRE AND PERFORMANCE

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The presentation's starting point will be the 1960s with its performative turn from textual to performative culture with the Viennese actionist's issues of violence and sacrifice, Rudolf Schwarzkogler's violence to his own body and self sacrifice as well as Herman Nitch's sacrificial ritual of committing violence to a victim's body in *Orgy* mystery Theatre. In their actions the two artists involved the spectators and used them as performers. The infection of the participants with violence led to the transgression of the carefully watched and guarded confines of the taboo zone in public and should lead to the cleansing of the individual from violence. In their actions and happenings a provisional community made up of individuals who dared to violate strong taboos publicly was established. In the act of symbolic dismemberment of their common cultural tradition Schwarzkogler and Nitch entered the domain of liminality and were transformed.

As a second example of the performative turn I will take Richard Schechner's performance *Dionysus in 69*, a special fusion of theatre and the ritual that was supposed to bring about transformations both in the performers and the spectators. Schechner's understanding of the performative turn was linked to his critic of the textual culture and the contemporary industrial society. Thus it can be interpreted as a turn from text to performance, a deliberate opposition to the written tradition that has become a burden. As Erika Fischer-Lichte summons his views: "A new performative turn is needed that will transform the solid and fixed textual culture of the past into a fluid, ever-changing performative culture of the future that will grant the missing dimensions. Theatre can contribute to the performative turn required when it sets out to threaten 'the text as it was part of an oral tradition'. The fixed text has to be dismembered in order to allow the ever-changing performance to emerge."<sup>1</sup>

Our presentation will try to locate some traces of the performative turn of the 1960-s and 1970-s in the theatre and performing arts of the last two decades. We will try to identify and describe the traces of this "cultural revolution"

of the turn of the century in texts, performances and concepts of selected contemporary theatrical and performing art practitioners. Within their work we will attempt to detect some provisional answers to the big questions the performative revolution of the turn of the century proposed. Namely opening up the new possibilities for the theatricalization of politics, economics, law, arts and everyday life. Establishing theatre and performing arts as a cultural model.

As we summoned up in the introduction, the specific turn from the referential to performative function resulted in various forms or explorations of physical as well as psychological limits in both the artist and the audience. Members of the audience thus found themselves in an in-between position, a state of liminality that produced a destabilisation of spectator's perception of himself, the others and reality. But – as Marvin Carlson states in his *Performance, a critical introduction*, when describing the unstable position of the *resistant performance* – the idea that in such performances "real women, real presence and real time" could be separated from their 'representations' could not easily be reconciled with the growing feeling that so-called 'reality' was itself experienced only through representation."<sup>2</sup>

If a classical performance artists strongly believed that their actions enacted an authentic provocation against traditional values in society and represented the very foundation of the value of art and at the same time made one believe in its political provoking potential, the 1990's saw an increased disbelief in anything authentic. The 1990's became more and more interested in the performative as related to new media. They stressed the fact Philip Auslander defines as follows: "Mediatized forms like film and video can be shown to have the same ontological characteristics as live performance, and live performance can be used in ways indistinguishable from the uses generally associated to mediatized forms. Therefore ontological analysis does not provide a basis for privileging live performance as an oppositional discourse."<sup>3</sup> Thus follow-

<sup>2</sup> Carlson, Marvin. *Performance, A Critical Introduction*, London, New York: Routledge, 1996: p. 175.

<sup>3</sup> Auslander, Philip. *Liveness: Performance in a Mediatized Culture*. London/New York: Routledge, 1999: p. 159.

<sup>1</sup> Fischer-Lichte, Erika. *Theatre, Sacrifice, Ritual*, London/New York: Routledge, 2005: p. 224.

ing Benjamin, we can argue that live performance has today indeed been pried from its shell and became equal to other forms. Due to this fact it can no longer simply be understood as auratic or authentic.

**III.** Let us consider some cases. For a start, Elfriede Jelinek and Thomas Bernhard, two contemporary playwrights that will represent the field of no more dramatic theatre texts (Gerda Poschmann) or postdramatic theatre (Hans-Thies Lehmann). Both dramatists constantly call attention to the performative nature of their plays and dramatize cultural and political institutions and events. By using various techniques (for example excessive repetition, sampling, quotations and misquotations, reappropriations of various texts and discourses, metatheatrical references) they subordinate the referential mode of their theatre and point to a performative nature of the theatre event. With some similarities to Peter Handke's play *Der Ritt über den Bodensee* (namely the non matrix-representation, constant shift to the performative nature of a theatre event on one side and naming characters of the play after the famous actors of the German silent movies as Eric von Stroheim etc. Elfriede Jelinek uses in her piece *Burgtheater* the stressing of the fact that the actual actors are performing the roles of the Burgtheater actors from the Nazi 1940-s. Thus she produces allusions and references to the acting and performance and together with the play's linguistic performativity symbolically enacts the Anschluss and its results. The audience is thus forced to face with the inevitable self-reflection of their role in the contemporary post-Nazi Austria.

In his play *Heldenplatz* Thomas Bernhard uses similar techniques and aims at the similar result Mark Anderson summons up in the following statement:

»**T**he actual audience assembled for the performance, which no doubt included Austrians who had been part of the crowd welcoming Hitler, was thus forced to confront its own 'voice' when recorded chants of 'Sieg Heil' were piped onstage from the wings, as if this voice were coming from Heroe's Square outside. The aesthetic sphere constituted by the theatre gives way to history and politics; audience members become actors in a play that takes them fifty years back in the past to confront what might be called the *Urszene* of Austrian politics: the body politics' embrace of Hitler."<sup>4</sup>

Both plays take into account the fact stressed by the performative turn of the 1960-s, which Fischer-Lichte defines as body co-presence of actors and performers, the co-presence of the phenomenal as well as the semiotic body, which she considers a highly specific nature of a live performance in all its senses. More than this. They do not consider a performance as work of art in *stricto sensu* but as an event that comes into being by way of interaction between actors and spectators, a process Fischer-Lichte defines as *authopoetic* in a sense that it exists only as event. As they write a piece for theatre they prepare a scenario for a specific constellation between actors and

spectators they would like the performance to enact. Their aim being also to disable the spectators to have a complete control over the event, to put them in a state of instability. They expect the performances of their text to produce a specific collapsing of oppositions. The performers in it are supposed to live through the performance as an aesthetic, social and political process in whose course power struggles are fought and usual oppositions subject vs. Object, presence vs. Representation, art vs. Social reality collapse and dichotomies seem to dissolve. The spectators on the other hand are transferred into a state that alienates them from everyday life and norms of the society. The result of this is the destabilization of the perception of the reality due to the liminality of the performance event, which has for a consequence a re-orientation of the individual (in most cases with a limited time of effect).

**W**hat Jelinek and Bernhard are aiming at is a liminal experience for the spectators and the performers, which is specific for the genre of the performance and contemporary theatre. And although aesthetic experience does not result in a socially accepted change of status of identity, it may well cause in individual participants a change of their perception of reality, self and others.

**IV.** As a second example of the destabilization of the perception of the reality due to the liminality of the performance event we will take a performance *We are all Marlene Dietrich FOR* (2005) by Emil Hrvatin and Erne Ómarsdóttir, which deliberately refers itself to the performative turn of the 1960-s. The performance creates a platform for a dialogue with essential premises of performance activism and oppositional art of Guillermo Gómez-Peña and his artistic collective La Pocha Nostra. Both artists are more than aware that the traditional boundaries between politics, culture, technology, finance, national security, and ecology are disappearing. In this situation they propose a concrete artistic answer to the question Richard Schechner asks in his book *Performance Studies, an Introduction*: "If a globalisation was treated as performance, what kind of performance would it be?"<sup>5</sup>

**A**mong various competitive scenarios they choose one that undermines a postcolonial mimicry with its own humanitarian jargon. They subvert today hardly existing and highly blurred borders between art and politics. If Gómez-Peña's *Newly discovered Amerindians* exposed uncomfortable parallels between international arts festivals, colonial expositions and tourist expeditions and thus created a parallel world of art commenting on the state of ethics in post-colonial society, Hrvatin/ Ómarsdóttir are trying to renovate the genre of the artistic program for soldiers on the front in order to change the potential public's perspective on war. To achieve this goal they employ elements of dance, dance theatre, physical theatre, live concert and media event and constantly balance between the real and fictive event while using military binary system.

**W**e are all Marlene Dietrich FOR builds its form of "radical performance" on the extensive usage of "over identi-

<sup>4</sup> Anderson, "Fragments of deluge: The Theater of Thomas Bernhard's Prose", *A Companion to the Works of Thomas Bernhard*, Matthias Konzett, ed. Rochester: Camden House, 2002, p. 132.

<sup>5</sup> Richard Schechner. *Performance Studies, An Introduction*. London/New York: Routledge, 2002: p. 223.



fiction", a strategy practiced in all the consequences in the 1980-s and 1990-s by "the post socialist politicised art" of Neue Slowenische Kunst (Laibach). Thus it stresses the performative nature of a theatrical event and produces a feeling of "uneasiness", raised in a spectator by various means. Firstly by hypertrophying the ideological impacts of the mechanism of the hybrid genre of the so-called "entertainment for soldiers". Secondly by a deliberate bombardment with various signs, super saturation of various channels of a communication through representation. Performance thus creates a visible gap between signifier and signified. As a consequence new politics of the performance, understood in terms of Philip Auslander, are created, a live performance "exposing processes of cultural control".<sup>6</sup>

The strategies of the performance rise from a presumption that any cultural action is already inscribed into a global discourse of polis and therefore cannot exist outside the predominant cultural formations. The fact that meta-criticism is no longer possible and that no strategy of resistance can be employed outside this dominant system. In the performance all the rules are broken, public is exposed to the 'violence' of representation and repetition, which can be linked to the violence of the society of spectacle. The performative turn is re-enacted.

To slowly conclude: The examples discussed are but a top of the iceberg of various strategies employed by artists as Einar Schleef, Sarah Kane, Frank Castorf, Societas Raffaello Sanzio, Bojan Jablanovec, Jan Fabre, Christoph Marthaller, Forced Entertainment etc. In their works they trace, re-enact and reappropriate basic postulates of the performative turn. They point to the fact that the undeniable trace of the performative turn of the 1960's in the contemporary performing arts is without any doubt a new kind of unity of spectators and performers that brought a change to both parties. If the performers are constantly exposed to the fact that they have to question and request their representative function and open up as possible the theatrical or performative event to the performativeness, the role of the spectators changed from the expected role of a passive hermeneutic process of decoding the performer's articulation to something much more active, entering into a praxis, »in which meanings are not so much communicated as created, questioned and negotiated.

The audience is invited and expected to operate as a co-creator of whatever meanings and experience the event generates.<sup>7</sup> And it is precisely this trace of the performative turn that can be identified in the work of some of the most prominent contemporary performance (theatre) artists of the last two decades.

<sup>6</sup> Philip Auslander. "Toward a Concept of the Political in Postmodern Theatre". *Theatre Journal*, 39, March 1987.

<sup>7</sup> Carlson: p. 197.

## HEGEL'S CONCEPTION OF THE END OF ART: A FEW REMARKS

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**B**y no means could we say that the conception of 'the end of art' as found in Hegel's philosophy is simple. In addition we could claim that it is one of the marginal thoughts in his philosophy. Regardless of this we should not consider this notion independently from his other conceptions. Nevertheless, we have to pose the question, asking what kind of the end and what kind of art is here concerned. Hegel mentioned that in his time art did not offer as much satisfaction of the spiritual needs as former times and people have searched and also found only in it. He also observed that the beautiful times of Greek art and the golden times of the late mediaeval period have passed. But can we truly conclude that Hegel did not see any future whatsoever for art in general?

**W**hen discussed the famous Hegel's end of art thesis was generally referred basically to his lectures on aesthetics (1820/21), therefore we should first of all draw our attention to his philosophy on art. In his lectures on aesthetics Hegel discussed three forms of art: symbolic, classical and romantic. He analysed them individually, but he also applied all of them to the history of art. If the symbolic form of art corresponds to the oldest era of art, the classical form succeeds it and in the last period we can observe what Hegel calls romantic art. Why and how the defined art form belongs to a certain period of history, Hegel explained in compliance with the evolution of the ideal into individual forms of artistic beauty. In general Hegel understands the symbolic form as the one in which the meaning and expression can not suit each other completely, thus a sort of discrepancy can be found.

On the contrary, in the classical form of art the meaning and its completely corresponding form are uniformed in an independent whole, which is perfect in itself. This form is the centre of art, because here reality fully matches the concept of beauty. If the symbolic art form has aspired to attain this and failed, the classical art form has yet to succeed in reaching this goal. If we cast an eye on the history of art, Hegel was convinced that the classical ideal is realized within Greek antiquity.

However, classical art has not reached the end of its task. It has not succeeded in finding the extreme oppositions, in

which the absolute has its foundation, thus it has not succeeded in reconciling these oppositions. Classical art does not exceed the true ideal, it does not know that layers, which have to do with the contrary, subject as an abstract figure in relation to the ethics and the absolute, sin and evil on the one hand and the split and the non-continuance of the subjective interiority on the other; in general it does not know for the whole palette of that clefts, which bring what is not beautiful, what is ugly and repulsive in a sensual as also in a spiritual sense.

To summarize Hegel's review of art in history, first there was the power of fantasy that can be noticed in the tendency to rise from nature to spirituality, but this striving has remained nothing but searching of the spirit, which in such a manner was not yet a true meaning for art. It got its meaning merely as an external form for natural meanings and abstractions of substantial interiority. In classical art we can find spirituality that is a foundation and principle of meaning. The external form is also not superficial; on the contrary, in this example the spirituality is completely imbued with its external appearance. Classical art has idealized the ideal and made it suitable to the reality of the spirit, thus classical art has reached the beautiful uniformity; it became the representation of the ideal, a perfect kingdom of beauty. Hegel stated that nothing can be and become more beautiful than classical art.

However, there is something more sublime than the beautiful appearance of the spirit in its direct sensual form. For this uniformity occurs in the element of the external and creates a sensual reality with its defined corresponding being. In such a manner it sets itself opposite the true notion of the spirit. The true totality of the ideal is now abolished and split into a two-sided whole, into the entirety of subjectivity and the entirety of the external appearance. The principle of the spirit is the reconciliation with itself and the uniformity of its notion and its reality, therefore the spirit can find its certain corresponding being only in its internal spirituality. The form of romantic art is defined on the basis of the internal notion of that meaning, for which art is called to present. The content of the romantic art form has the task of making itself beautiful, so that this beauty transforms itself into the spiritual beauty of the interiority as a spiritual subjectivity, which is eternal in itself. Absolute subjectivity would abolish art and would be accessible only for the thought if it would not

– to be a true subjectivity corresponding to its notion – also enter the externally defined being. This moment of reality belongs to the absolute, therefore it is not presented as one god who abolishes what is human and natural, but as a true absolute is opening itself.

The task of art in the romantic form is to express the absolute, i. e. the spiritual consciousness in the subject. Thus Christian art corresponds to the romantic form of art, as the human form is presented in such a manner that it is immediately recognized as something that involves the divine. The second type of romantic art is connected to the separation of the spirit from itself. In order to gain its totality and freedom the spirit must raise itself as the finity of nature and at the same time in opposition to itself as the infinity. Hence the necessity occurs to reach the reconciliation between the natural, the finite and the kingdom of the truth. The spiritual reconciliation must be shown as an activity, a movement of the spirit, as a process, a development, in which battles and conflicts constantly arise. As the key moment pain, death and the painful feeling of nothingness of the spirit and body occurs. The third kind of romantic meanings in Hegel's belief are linked to the presentations of a human being, which remains in a human form. Here the spiritual aims, the world's interests, passions, suffering, joy, hope and satisfaction are displayed.

The romantic itself is a principle of abolishment of the classical ideal. In the classical plastic arts the subjective inner is tightly connected to the external, thus the external presents the shape of the inner. On the contrary, in the romantic form the meaning of the external world gains freedom to show itself and to preserve itself in its singularity and particularity. In a similar fashion the subjectivity of the soul can become the key element for the representation and this is likewise a kind of a contingency. The romantic interiority can therefore be shown in any circumstances, it can be partitioned in thousands of situations, states, relations, conflicts and reconciliations. In romantic art there is a place for everything, from the most sublime to the most insignificant and trivial.

**T**he questions we could raise now is what kind of art can be found in the phase when the romantic form is on the decline, what does the end of the romantic form actually mean for art in general and what succeeds romantic art? Is this the end of art?

**I**n Hegel's opinion the first condition for art to still exist lies in the uniformity of the artwork and the artist, for the task of an artist is to make the true essence that he carries within himself objective, to present it and realize it in a form. The artist is in the process of becoming unified with the material in a pure thought, he is also unified with the object itself. Therefore subjectivity is entirely presented in an object and an artwork originates from the interiority.

Hegel believed that the situation had changed and this did not happen accidentally, for it represents a progress with in art. By demonstrating the peculiar material as an object of representation, art is progressively becoming liberated from the contents that are presented. On the other hand, if we get something as an object for observing with our sensual and spiritual eyes in such a perfect way that its content is now exhausted, everything is externalized and nothing remains undefined and internalized, i. e. the absolute interest disap-

pears. This is because the spirit is at work on objects only until something mysterious remains within them.

We should not forget that Hegel understands art as fundamentally engaged with its sensual appearance. In his opinion art of his times did not need to be related to some certain content and to a certain manner of presentation, corresponding merely to the content – this was something that belonged to the past. Thus art stands above its particular forms and presentations and moves freely and independently. For the artist whose talent and spirit have been liberated from the earlier limitation to a particular form of art, any form and any content are free to use. Anyhow, Hegel tried to define what kind of material could still be interesting for art. He ascertained that no matter how it is handled the spirit has to be shown as it is in those times. He believed that practicing past art forms is not a solution, only the present remains fresh, everything else has turned pale. Hegel stated that the appearance and production of what is directly human in a multilateral sense and in an endless transformation is what can form the absolute content of our art.

But Hegel emphasizes the importance of the reflection on art. He is convinced that an artist must be well educated. He analyzed the art forms in order to show their contents, from which also the manner of representation arises. He believed that the task of art is to express a certain internal value in an adequate sensual reality. Therefore philosophy of art also has a task to apprehend with the thought what these values are and the beautiful way in which they appear.

**H**owever, considering Hegel's analysis of art forms and their application within history of art, we can ascertain that Hegel spoke about the abolishment of the romantic art form and discussed the end of romantic art if seen as a historical art epoch, but we are still not able to claim with certainty that he believed in the end of art in general.

**C**ertain Hegel's interpreters, e. g. Peter Szondi, stressed the problem of Hegel's classicism, his setting of romanticism and his anticipation that it will pass into bourgeois-realistic art.<sup>1</sup> Szondi emphasized that in Hegel's philosophy everything occurs as a process and everything has its specific place in the historical evolution. The system itself is a historical process and art is not equally legitimized each time, but it stands in simultaneous importance to religion and history, even if its own artistic conception has scarcely anything developed. Therefore, Szondi claimed, Hegel was strongly under the influence of the unique Greek art, thus all further development following it must be explained as a movement of the system towards art and beyond. Szondi also criticized Hegel's theory on romantic essence as a negative answer to the classicistic tradition, as this was not a plan, but we should feel this answer in the unique widening of the historical knowledge, for which we have to be thankful to romanticism.

For instance, Georg Lukács<sup>2</sup> demonstrated that in his *Phenomenology of Spirit* (1807) Hegel understood art merely as the Greek antiquity and that the period of art also came to its end with the decline of Greek antiquity, with its passing

<sup>1</sup> Peter Szondi, "Hegels Lehre von der Dichtung", *Poetik und Geschichts-philosophie I*, Frankfurt am Main: Suhrkamp, 1976 (1st edition 1974), pp. 267–513.

<sup>2</sup> Georg Lukács, "Hegel's Ästhetik". W. F. Hegel, *Ästhetik*.

over to the Roman state. In other words, Lukács claimed that Hegel explained oriental art (the symbolic form) as the one, in which the spirit has not yet reached the level of the principle, however, in mediaeval and modern art (the romantic form) it has already exceeded it. We can encounter the problem of form in oriental art, and likewise or particularly within modern art. In such a manner the spirit has passed art by, and art has lost its philosophical importance. If we consequently think in this aspect also as regards the end, Lukács reached the assertion that the period of art is at its end.

However, some other interpreters claim that such critics of the Hegel's end of art thesis fail Hegel's intention. For instance, A. Gethemann-Siefert and B. Collenberg-Plotnikov<sup>3</sup> are convinced that such reproaches are too simplified and are a result of the later 'improvements' of Hegel's conception and its evoked ambiguity. In addition to the interpretations that criticize the classicism of Hegel's theory, there are also other interpretations that emphasize the endless character of the future (H. G. Hotho, Th. Vischer, Th. Mundt). Some of the more recent explanations find the very critic of art of our times in Hegel's conceptions. For example Karsten Harries is certain that Hegel's thesis on the future of art caused the explosive development of modern art.<sup>4</sup> Similarly William Fowkes claims the doctrine on the death of art is a caricature.<sup>5</sup> Fowkes tries to show how the third act of the art drama still lasts today and is the most interesting of all acts. Fowkes is also certain that Hegel's contribution brightens contemporary art.

On the other hand Gethemann-Siefert and Collenberg-Plotnikov comment that Hegel refused the hope of Goethe's times as in the only and the complex form, art in the modern age is just before its end. In such a manner art has lost its self-evident, pre-reflective engagement in social life. Formally this end of art is also a break that offers endless opportunities. The subjective historicalness of the artists can serve any style and content.

Each of Hegel's art forms has a progress within itself, as has each historic nation. It always starts with the period of preparation, which is followed by the age of blooming and finally the period of decline arrives. However, if we apply these forms of art onto the history of art, we get a progressive model of art history. But a progressive structure occurs also at history in general. The triad of life occurs on the macro level of both histories – the history of art and the history of the world. There are stages such as the period of the childish spirit, followed by the period of the adolescent, which turns into manhood, and finally there is the senile period of the spirit. The progresses and structures of both histories coincide; actually it is the same history model, or to be more precise the same history. Hegel claimed that the progress of world history is an evolution of the notion of freedom. Therefore we could conclude that history should end when freedom is finally reached. Such realization would mean a termination of history.

But art also passes through the three stages (the symbolic, the classical and the romantic) and we could ask where does it rise to? The suggested answer could be – towards the end of art, of course. But by not means can we expect to find the notion of 'the end of art' in the sense of the slogan in Hegel's philosophy. It is more likely that the famous 'end of art', that is often believed to be found in Hegel work, is rather 'something like a deduction from the premises of several conceptual schemes or models which are superimposed one upon the other,'<sup>6</sup> as is believed by Frederic Jameson.

Anyhow, if for Hegel the history of the world ascends to freedom, where does art ascend to? Is it designed to finally transfigure into something else, something supposedly better than it is in its obligation to its sensual nature? Or does art similarly as the history of the world achieve its aim or the 'end', when it attains freedom? Hegel explained that art has reached a stage in his times (specifically in Germany) where an artist is free to use any form and express any content. Regarding this aspect of the end of art, here is the key relation of 'Hegel's end of art' and the contemporary thesis of the end of art as found in Arthur Danto, Hans Belting, Gianni Vattimo and other scholars who participated specifically in the aesthetic and art-historian discussions in the 1980s. The quite recently discussed 'end of art' has undoubtedly its origins in Hegel's philosophy and is related to similar observations concerning the fact that the artists are finally liberated to use any form and any content, just as stated by Hegel. But the contemporary 'end of art' is essentially involved with the specific atmosphere of the final decades of the twentieth century in the western world – not only with the topics related to postmodernism and with the ending of modernism as a style, but more generally with the observations that something huge is reaching its end, an entire epoch, in fact that modernity is coming to an end. Thus the 'end of art' as understood in the second half of the twentieth century in thereby related to a common western cultural feeling of the end of almost everything that was still obligatory 'yesterday'. Significantly these discussions arose alongside the strong belief in the liberated society, also in the sense of the enfranchisement of the up to that time oppressed social groups.

However, the discussions on 'the end of art' could be found in an atmosphere of belief in social liberation. It can also be noticed that the 'Hegelian' end of art and the 'Hegelian' end of history coincide. Both moments of historical termination actually signify the same stage in the development of the spirit – it is the moment of attaining freedom. In other words: the aim of the spirit in achieving progress lies in its tendency towards self-realization in the world's history.

I have already noticed that for Hegel art has to be engaged with a sensual appearance and that he also emphasizes the importance of the reflection on art. Well, a specific aspect of Hegel's thesis on the end of art can be found in the relation between art and the philosophy of art. Philosophy exceeds art, for art is occupied with the sensual appearance, while philosophy does not have this limitation and lays its priority on the use of pure thought, which is the most inter-

<sup>3</sup> A. Gethemann-Siefert, B. Collenberg-Plotnikov, "Die These vom Ende der Kunst", in: *Ästhetik und Kunstphilosophie von der Antike bis zur Gegenwart*, Stuttgart: Alfred Kröner Verlag, 1998, pp. 373–375.

<sup>4</sup> Karsten Harries, "Hegel on the Future of Art", in: *The Review of Metaphysics* 27, No. 108, Washington: The Catholic University of America, June 1974, p. 678.

<sup>5</sup> William Fowkes, *A Hegelian Account of Contemporary Art*, MI: UMI Research Press, 1980.

<sup>6</sup> Frederic Jameson, "'End of Art' or 'End of History'?", in: *The Cultural Turn*, New York, London: Verso, 1998, p. 76.

nal essence of the nature of the spirit. Hegel stated that when philosophy makes art its subject matter, what happens is that the artistically beautiful occurs in such a form that it stands directly opposite the thought and therefore the thought to make its own activity is forced to destroy it. But this is one of the hesitations Hegel discussed and commented – he said that this would also mean that the real would generally be disfigured and destroyed with observation, but however exactly the opposite is the case, the thought should approach it.

Another hesitation should be considered, namely that the spirit is calmed no earlier than it has imbued all the products with thought, it is only then that it has truly won. Thus art obtains its true confirmation only in philosophy.

What should be emphasized is that this is not only about art inevitably needing philosophy as a mental reflection, but what is essential here is that art must be related to philosophy. Philosophy co-constructs art, in the same way as does religion. The relation of art and religion deserves special attention, however we do not have time to discuss this here. But we can notice that for Hegel art is in direct relation to religion – especially in times of romantic art when it became analogous to religion. A certain aspect of 'the end of art thesis' could surely be found also in the thought that art ceases to be art when it starts to become the most sublime and deep, for at that stage it is actually turning into a religion. On the other hand we could also raise the speculation that in the recent times the role religion has had in the past has transposed to some other spheres of life, thus this shift should essentially also determine the nature and the role of art.

For Hegel, art is fundamentally intertwined into a common circle with religion and philosophy. We should also not forget that philosophy is the highest form of the spirit, therefore it in itself exceeds art. In the past art has had a strong link to philosophy, but in the last stage of history it seems that this link could be dangerous for the existence of art. The reason this link seems so different now in comparison to the past is related to the maturity of the spirit on this level of evolution. Art in the romantic form is much deeper, the opposition between finity and infinity are extreme; thus it is not a coincidence that the relations between the three forms of the spirit (art, religion and philosophy) are far more complex. As stated by Hegel art passes into philosophy on one hand, but on the other art also has much more thought and reflection in itself. In Hegel's opinion the type of art that corresponds to this stage of the spirit is poetry, namely that, which contains a great deal of philosophy. And because art is necessarily engaged with a sensual appearance, this is at the same time what prevents it from becoming philosophy.

Hegel believed that art always needed philosophy. And if art will not have more philosophy in itself, it will need it in the philosophy about itself, namely in aesthetics. Therefore art obtains its true confirmation only in philosophy. On one hand philosophy is thus destroying art, while it is on the other co-constructing it, i. e. they are walking hand in hand. And this does not mean the end of art. Above all this means that art has changed in comparison to the former forms in which it occurred. The relations between art and philosophy, art and religion, are also present in a different mode. If art has now lost its independency, we must notice that it has not had it in the past; its co-dependence with the two other forms is still a part of its definition.

Peter Szondi<sup>7</sup> emphasized that through the historical development of art the dialectical process of the beautiful does not have the achievement of beautiful for its aim, but the self-consciousness, the infinity that the spirit possesses. From the aspect of aesthetics the romantic epoch is a stage of decline, but from the aspect of philosophy of the spirit, it is a rise, an ascension beyond the limits of the artistic beautiful. And this also means that Szondi believed that Hegel saw romantic art no longer as something that could still be valid as art. Szondi stated that already in romantic art reconciliation was not situated in it as the synthesis, but was already beyond the sphere of art.

Szondi also explained that the reason the romantic form of art always grabs somewhere else does not originate merely from the art's hastening for the element of pure thought, but in the fact that this form has already in its basis left the ground of art. If the transposition of the symbolic form to the classical form has taken place within art, romantic art has found its origin in another, non-artistic ground. Therefore Szondi is convinced that romantic art does not have a motive in itself and is not a medium into which the divine would enter. Instead the opposite is the case, it finds its reality in Christian events; then it is only secondarily valid as art.

In other words this interpretation of Hegel's aesthetics means that art after the classical era can merely ascend to its decline. Szondi sees the romantic form as a stage of declination. Such an understanding could be at least discussible, as Hegel considers that in romantic art the oppositions have deepened and on one hand the level of freedom is higher than ever before, while on the other the intertwining with religion and philosophy is as complex as ever. However, we can directly object Szondi at least in the fact that for Hegel romantic art is not merely Christian art, but also the diversity of the presentations of a human being, which remains in a human form. In the romantic form there is not only space for the divine, but also for the sublime in a far more extensive sense as well as for the trivialities of everyday life.

As already mentioned there is something we may not skip when discussing Hegel's end of art thesis; namely Hegel's notion of the spirit, which makes progress and gains self-realization in the history of the world. I have already noticed that there is a certain concordance between the progress of art in history and the progress of history itself. As the three forms of the spirit art, religion and philosophy simultaneously progress through the history of the world, within which the spirit is actually the one that truly progresses. Art, religion and philosophy are merely forms of realization for the spirit on its journey. The aim to which the spirit progresses is the absolute. For the spirit is free and this is the essence it has to make real, therefore this is what the spirit strives for in the history of the world.

Georg Lukács<sup>8</sup>, who understands Hegel's aesthetics in fundamental relation to Hegel's method and system, claims that if we consider the development of the spirit in Hegel's sense, art is merely a preparatory stage for a better knowledge of reality. Anyway, this knowledge is philosophical; the result is an identical subject-object.

<sup>7</sup> Peter Szondi, "Hegels Lehre von der Dichtung", pp. 167–513.

<sup>8</sup> Georg Lukács, "Hegel's Ästhetik", p. 28.

It is not a mere coincidence that philosophy (as the domain of mental observation) is the one, which has, so to say, the last word in this progression. The spirit approaches the absolute through history, as well as through art – of course in the intertwining with religion and philosophy. The common aim of all three is nothing else than the achievement of absolute knowledge. In *The Phenomenology of the Spirit* Hegel analysed the forms of the spirit in the process up to the point at which the consciousness cannot exceed itself anymore, because the conception fits the object and the object fits the conception. The necessary two-sidedness of all processes of reality is presented, for reality has its subjective and objective side. The phenomena of consciousness in all stages of the development from sensual perception to the self-consciousness show the transformation from itself into the sphere of the object, in relation to which the consciousness is developing. The entire reality is thus understood as a dialectical evolutionary process of the absolute mind, which has its subjective and objective side. If at the beginning there is a direct spirit as a non-spiritual or sensual consciousness, the phenomenology of the spirit concludes with the being that is completely mediated. The consciousness thus progresses from the first direct opposition between it and the object to absolute knowledge.

The question we should raise now is whether this point of the absolute is truly attainable at all. Is the point of absolute knowledge not an empty point, as claimed by Mladen Dolar?<sup>9</sup> He stated that in absolute knowledge, to which we constantly ascend, the consciousness actually discovers nothing, but is directed back to its ascension and thus to the imperfection of its knowledge. As stated by Dolar at the end we merely discover that the truth can be found in the journey itself, therefore we were cheated in such a manner, that we had everything we were striving for, already from the very beginning.

The question of the beginning is also fundamentally related to the question of the end. Hegel discusses the problem of the beginning already in *The Phenomenology of the Spirit*, as well as in his *The Science of Logic*. He claims that moving forward at the same time means returning back to the foundation, to the origin and the real.<sup>10</sup> At the end the world contains everything that has been contained within the progress that preceded the result. And everything, including the beginning, depends on the result as a principle. Therefore Hegel believed that it is necessary for the result to which the movement leads to be discussed as a foundation.

The problems of the beginning and the end are essentially connected to the problem of finity and infinity. In the *Science of Logic*, Hegel explained in great detail, why it would be unfounded to claim that content is something else than form, the interior something else than the exterior, as well as finity something else than infinity. In his dialectics he originated from the basic principle that identity ( $A=A$ ) is a principle of contradiction. The subject matter of the dialectics is a movement that shows a constant link of the oppositions, so that the negative and the positive become the total relation of the function.

The finity and infinity are thus not only related, but also unified. Finity passes into infinity. Hegel claimed that the infinite is unreal and the unreal is unreachable. The representation of the endless progress is a straight line, which is infinite only in its two borders, which is always there, where it (and it is an existence) is not, and where it passes towards this non-existence, when infinity is true infinity that is bended back into itself, its representation becomes a circle, a line that reaches itself, is joined and present in a whole, with no beginning and no end.

<sup>9</sup> Mladen Dolar, *Heglova fenomenologija duha 1.*, Ljubljana: Društvo za teoretsko psihoanalizo, 1990, p. 9.

<sup>10</sup> G. W. F. Hegel, *Wissenschaft der Logik. Bd 1, Die objektive Logik*: (1812/1813), Hamburg: Meiner, 1978.

## L'ÉPREUVE DE L'ART ENTRE IDÉALITÉ ET CRUAUTÉ RÉFLEXIONS AUTOUR DE LA PEINTURE ET DE LA PHILOSOPHIE DE R. PASSERON

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**J**e voudrais avant tout puisque nous sommes dans un panel de poétique dire un mot de ce qui nous unit dans la démarche réflexive. L'approche poétique n'exclue pas la dimension esthétique, mais elle porte l'intérêt sur les conduites créatrices. Elle tente d'éclairer l'œuvre à partir de sa genèse de production dans la double dimension de gratuité et de nécessité et dans sa capacité d'instauration de sens.

Le travail de fondation et de clarification de la double opération productrice et esthétique qui se mue en instauration a été initié, comme on le sait par la philosophie de Paul Valéry qui a donné à penser l'art comme production à partir des modes d'investissement techniques et affectifs du créateur artiste et par la capacité de reconnaissance et d'adhésion du récepteur.

René Passeron<sup>1</sup> a développé les recherches en poétique en élargissant la conception de Paul Valéry à plusieurs pratiques artistiques. Il a développé dans ses écrits et dans les travaux pluridisciplinaires au CNRS un champ théorique où il reconsidère les notions de création, de répétition, de compromission et d'instauration. On peut qualifier ce champ théorique d'espace ouvert de la rationalité qui laisse aussi place aux éléments irrationnels interférant dans le faire artistique et respecte la singularité des œuvres. Son objectif est de saisir sous le devenir des œuvres des régularités qui permettent de distinguer une création comme production remarquable.

La poétique opère donc en transversalité (ou en horizontalité à travers des strates). En tant qu'interrogation théorique du processus de création, elle pense les techniques d'élaboration et de régulation des champs de production artistique et met en évidence leurs conditions de possibilité et leurs limites. Elle transgresse les différences de leurs objets et schémas opérationnels en dévoilant leur capacité historique d'instauration de valeurs et de sens.

C'est en ce sens que René Passeron comme Paul Valéry ont mis en rapport la dynamique du geste, l'activité neurologique et « la situation affective qui les accompagne »

dans « les modifications successives apportées à la matière » (Valéry, Cahiers, T 18, p.37). Cette activité créatrice est une situation de capture de force qui conditionne la sensation et rend possible une réception énergétique de l'œuvre.

**L**a création artistique relève d'une poétique où la sensibilité et l'imagination sont des facteurs déterminants. Paul Valéry a pensé le lien dynamique entre le désir esthétique et la nécessité de la création en libérant la sensation de son état de passivité pour l'ouvrir à l'expérience sensible de la sensibilité et la dynamiser par l'imagination. La sensibilité devient productive (Valéry parle de « vertu productive ») dans sa transformation dans les formes de l'art. De même l'imagination créatrice porte en elle l'amplification du mouvement des épreuves du monde. Cette poétique des sens et du monde est celle du lien co-naturel des choses et des hommes. René Passeron appelle cela une « respiration créatrice » et y découvre un souffle avec le bruissement du sensoriel.

Je vais prendre comme champ d'applicabilité de cette poétique la peinture de René Passeron et ses exclamations philosophiques

### L'épreuve de l'art ou »l'obscurité ontologique«

Si on revient au dialogue platonicien du Phèdre où il est question du conflit des désirs dont le dépassement s'opère par l'orientation vers l'essence de la Beauté, on peut y déceler une figure augurale de l'épreuve de l'art entre idéalité et cruauté. Le mythe du Phèdre représente l'âme humaine par un char conduit par un cocher ailé, ce char est tiré par deux chevaux, l'un indompté, l'autre docile qui symbolisent le conflit douloureux des désirs terrestres et des désirs divins.

A la vue des essences éternelles, un tiraillement frénétique et opposé de l'attelage finit par une cohue qui fait perdre à l'âme ses ailes, la précipite sur terre où elle s'incarne dans un corps. Le souvenir des essences éternelles et de leur perte ne sera réveillé de manière sensible dans l'âme que par la rencontre terrestre de la beauté ; sa vision rappelle l'éclat éternel des essences et du bonheur céleste. Ce qui est intéressant, ici, c'est que parmi toutes les idées ou les essences, seule la Beauté Idéale se manifeste de manière sensible par l'épreuve des belles choses et de beaux corps et cette épreuve est plus forte que celle de toutes les autres qualités et vertus.

<sup>1</sup> René Passeron, *Pour une philosophie de la création*, Klincksieck, Paris 1989.

*La naissance d'Icare*, Aedged, 1996 où il fait dans la quatrième partie un lexique théorique des différents problèmes et concepts de la poétique.

De plus, l'émotion que nous éprouvons à la vue d'une beauté vient d'un sentiment de perte et de manque qui fait naître une sorte de désir violent ; il jette l'âme à la fois dans une douleur convulsive et une forme d'enthousiasme. En fait cette perte est d'ordre ontologique puisqu'il s'agit de la perte de l'essence éternelle de la Beauté avec laquelle l'âme était autrefois en contemplation. Elle est vécue de manière sensible comme une perte d'être puisque ce sont des essences qui donnent sens à l'existence.

Il se trouve que ce manque d'être ressenti dans l'épreuve terrestre de la beauté est occasionné notamment par la rencontre des beaux corps. L'âme de l'amant est érotisée, « se sent saisi de fièvre, bouillonne » et « s'agite dans la fureur et la souffrance » mais est aussi habitée d'une sorte de joie qui lui vient du souvenir lointain de l'essence éternelle de la Beauté. « L'amour est une pensée voyante », (Murmures René Passeron in *Thèmes*, p. 198.)

Ce transport d'une sensibilité blessée et convulsive est celui du « délire divin propre à la fois au poète, à l'amant et à la prophétesse ». On pourrait le lire comme la manifestation de l'excès qui préside à la création.

La dialectique du manque et de l'excès serait la matrice métaphorique de l'état initiatique de toute conduite créatrice, mais cet état est d'abord celui d'une émotion pure où, selon la version platonicienne, le désir demeure inassouvi pour identifier le désir d'idéalité ou d'éternité et se reporter ainsi sur l'objet idéal qui est l'Essence même de la beauté.

Le peintre René Passeron nous parle de la femme saisie au bout de sa mine de plomb en ces termes : « N'allais-je pas (...) bien au delà de la chair, en effet misérable mortelle, vers une transcendance où le désir - sans aliénation sublimatoire - trouve la beauté et l'harmonie qu'on appelle, ici et là, le divin ? » *Exclamation philosophiques*, p. 85.

Il précise bien que cette transcendance n'est pas celle d'une fuite sublimatoire mais de ce qu'il appelle une « Scandaleuse hypostase de la Beauté » qui pouvait être celle de « l'émotion absolue ».

Probablement est ce cette « scandaleuse hypostase » qui est à l'origine du traditionnel malaise philosophique devant l'épreuve de l'art. En effet, les diatribes platoniciennes contre les épopées et les arts plastiques et toute la postérité occidentale de cette condamnation ne sont-elles pas liées à la scandaleuse inscription de la divinité ou de l'idéalité dans le sensible, autrement dit au paradoxal avènement qu'est l'art lui-même ? Comment, en effet, du non-être de la matière et du chaos où elle baigne, créer de l'être, de surcroît par le bais de l'émotion pure, celle où s'éprouve l'humanité de l'homme dans son désir d'éternité ?

La solution que préconise le mythe du Phèdre déplace le problème de ce qu'on pourrait appeler « une poétique de l'être dans le sensible » ; elle le déplace du travail de l'oeuvre vers l'ascèse philosophique. Par ce déplacement, Platon s'écarte lui-même de son double et son rival qu'est l'artiste celui qui engage la question tragique du destin de l'homme directement dans le sensible et dans la matière du réel.

Le présumé « faux demiurge » qu'est l'artiste n'est-il pas en fait responsable du scandale qu'il dévoile parce qu'il donne corps à la situation paradoxale de la finitude et du désir d'éternité ? C'est dans l'épreuve même de l'art qu'il engage la question de « l'obscénité ontologique » au sens littéral

du terme, c'est-à-dire la question de l'être qui surgit toujours scandaleusement devant les scènes illusionnistes du sensible esthétisé.

L'art autonome et vivant n'est-il pas comme il est dit dans *Exclamations philosophiques* de René Passeron celui qui donne consistance à la question de l'être fut-ce par le fait du scandaleux qui permet dialectiquement de transcender la cruauté du réel dans une conception nouvelle et créatrice de cette cruauté.

Le théâtre de l'Antonin Artaud nous offre ce cas de figure. L'analyse qui en fit Franco Tonelli dans *l'esthétique de la cruauté* est pertinente à ce niveau : « La cruauté, remarque-t-il, n'est pas nécessairement revêtue d'une rôle de sang, d'horreur ou de sadisme, mais de rigueur extrême, de mouvement implacable et irréversible ». Artaud en parle comme d'un appel de forces qui ramènent l'esprit à la source de ses conflits et si ces conflits dit-il, ces forces sont noires, c'est la faute non pas du théâtre mais de la vie » (*Le théâtre et son double* Gall. P.38).

L'artiste confronte l'homme à son destin, à des questions fondamentales qui mènent à une prise de conscience ontologique et métaphysique de son existence. On peut se demander à la limite si le Phèdre où se joue le mythe du drame humain n'est pas aussi, à son niveau, un théâtre de la cruauté ? Même si comme le pense René Passeron, la cruauté d'Artaud est menacée de théâtralité par le fait d'un seul vrai cri, serait-ce celui d'Artaud lui-même, elle rend sensoriel le tragique de la vie.

Sans aller jusqu'à la révélation ou la crise cathartique par laquelle il y a prise de conscience de sa condition, de ses possibilités ou de son destin à travers l'épreuve de l'art, on peut penser que c'est le travail de l'oeuvre entre cruauté et idéalité qui nous met dans l'immanence d'un « devant être » au sens où l'entend R. Passeron c'est-à-dire ce qui préside à la création, une sorte d'impératif ontologique dans l'ordre du sensible.

En effet, « le vide ontologique » comme il l'écrit dans *Exclamations philosophiques* est celui « d'où part toute sortie créatrice hors de la suffisance ». Il est le foyer de l'expérience intime de l'épreuve de l'art, celle du désir de création qui est désir d'éternité dans la conscience cruelle que « tout art est le vecteur de la mort ! » *Exclamations philosophiques* p. 25.

C'est en ce sens que l'expiration ultime de l'humain qui est celle du cri de douleur (cristallisé ou explosé dans l'oeuvre *Le Cri* 1981 Lavis et Paillette) ou de *Nécropole I* 1977 Autoportrait du peintre dans le ventre de sa mère morte sable-polystyrène et tissu sur toile) est un déchirement pur qui fait problème par son intensité même à la musique la plus tragique. C'est pourquoi « l'obscénité ontologique » que tente de rendre la sublimité de la musique ou toute forme de picturalité est la tension entre la quasi impossible figure du vide ontologique et le désir d'éternité. Il s'agit ainsi de la dynamique poétique de l'irreprésentable qui, comme le dit R. Passeron « livré au vertige du vide » (EP p. 49) tente de forger des signes « non pas de l'Etre mais du Devant être », ce vide vertigineux qui préside à la création p. 52. Ici, on peut se demander si ce « devant être » qui concerne l'amoncellement de toute création artistique ne touche pas aussi cette zone préréflexive de la création (on peut même dire qu'émotion et penser sont ici, les deux faces d'une même situation). L'émotion a une charge ontologique autant que le concept est chargé d'affect. Le « devant être » de la création advient souvent lorsque de la cruauté naît une préréflexion qui rend proche affect et concept ; « C'est dans l'intolérable que s'accomplit la naissance de l'esprit » (p. 72)



## Cruauté, affect et concept

La cruauté qui vient du vide ontologique est celle là même de l'expérience nue de la réalité avec sa souffrance et sa laideur, celle concrète et ultime des massacres et des génocides. C'est par cet élément non artistique qu'est la cruauté que l'art récusé l'adéquation et la réconciliation devant la perte de sens face à la mort et devient par là même un « devant penser être qui est aussi » marqué d'affect. Ici on pouvait revenir à la théorie adornienne de la vérité de l'art. Il développe l'idée que devant la deshumanisation de l'homme et de la nature, il y a, par et dans l'art, un contenu de vérité qui est l'anamnèse d'un possible à travers les stigmates de la réalité sociale et de sa contre vérité.

C'est en prenant en charge la souffrance en ce qu'elle contient de laideur, d'élément non artistique, en se faisant le cryptogramme de la « souffrance accumulée » et en la transformant artistiquement que l'art fait apparaître la contre vérité de la situation sociale.

L'opération cathartique de l'art s'inscrit dans ce rapport de la réalité cruelle et de sa mise en forme artistique qui la réfléchit esthétiquement dans une œuvre : « par le seul fait qu'elles existent, les œuvres postulent l'existence d'une réalité inexistante et entrent de ce fait, en conflit avec l'inexistence de celle-ci » *Théorie esthétique*, p. 92. La vérité de l'art réside dans cette critique exercée par son existence même contre l'intolérable. C'est en sens qu'il faut comprendre que « l'art objectif est un oxymoron », il maintient à la fois l'apparence esthétique qu'Adorno appelle le rudiment magique (qui fait le charme de l'œuvre) et le caractère mimétique du monde désenchanté. Le rudiment magique de l'œuvre est ce qui sauve l'œuvre en créant « l'apparence esthétique ». On peut avancer que cette dimension de l'art est rendue possible par la dynamique « du devant être » qui est aussi un devant penser d'une pensée affectée par la l'expérience de la cruauté du réel et deshumanisation dans les épreuves tragiques.

Dans *Paralipomena*, p. 32, Adorno parle d'une certaine réception des mouvements musicaux comme d'une « promesse liée à la sensualité d'une réalité de contenu qui est aussi contenu de vérité ». A. Marie Trivier dans un article intitulée « Adorno : La douleur ou l'ouverture écorchée du philosophe » va jusqu'à dire qu'Adorno déconstruit « le mythe de la pure conceptualité du concept, en relevant sa teneur somatique, base *a posteriori* sur laquelle la pensée peut être affecté à penser quelque chose comme à recevoir ». Cette teneur somatique du concept nous la trouvons dans l'intensité aphoristique et poétique du « plaidoyer ontologique » pour l'amour-révolte (chapitre 4 in E.Ph où il est dit que le cogito de la phronésis créatrice n'est autre que l'adage de l'amour révolte) Car, qu'est ce que penser si l'idée est détachée de la vie et de l'amour qui nous y inscrit ? L'obscénité de la vie et ses corollaires d'obscénité sociale pourraient nous éloigner de l'effort créateur. C'est pourquoi R. Passeron préfère parler de « l'amour révolte et de la colère qui constitue le tissu de l'esprit ». Lorsqu'à la pensée du génocide, Adorno semble désespérer d'une possibilité de créer encore, il savait très bien que cela signifie aussi abandonner de penser et d'être. Il a continué jusqu'au bout de refuser l'idée d'une fin de l'art.

# TRANSMUTING IMAGINATION TO SENSATION: FROM STATE SPACE TO ARCHITECTURAL SPACE

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## 1. Introduction

According to Arnheim [1], *"space is experienced as given preceding all objects found in it, as the environment in which everything takes place and he continues: To hoping understand the nature of Architecture as an arrangement of buildings in a given continuous space, is impossible without accepting this intuitive and ecumenical way of observation"*. Arnheim begins his thesis from the visual perception of an architectural creation already existing, a result of a composition process. But it is also true that nothing can be experienced before it exists at least nothing related to Architecture. The Architect is the active creator of space.

Kant's most original contribution to philosophy is his "Copernican Revolution," stating that *"it is the appearance (Anschauung) that makes the object possible rather than the object that makes the appearance possible"*. Kant looks at the problem that often Architects face during the design phase. Kant describes this problem as follows [2, p8]: *"If the appearance depends on the state of the objects, then I cannot see how one may have knowledge about it (the appearance)"*. Kant solved this problem by saying: But if the objects depend on the state of our capability to create appearances, then I can imagine this possibility. Exactly this dilemma constitutes the foundation of the proposed design method. Bergson sets on, where Kant ends when he states that Ideas are coming from experience [3, p314] and continues that experience confronts us with becoming: that is sensible reality. Appearances are in the case of architecture materialized Ideas and the objective of the architect is to create finally sensible reality.

The creation of architectural space consists in the endeavour to realising an architectural idea which, however, can rarely be foreseen as to whether and to what the, the outcome will embody the power of the initial vision. Since the compositional process is an evolutionary process in the sense of its realisation, it is important that the way from the capture of the idea until its transmutation to the sensible reality, be also evolutionary and continuous especially in the initial steps of the compositional act. It is important to see that even the original idea of the architect could be revised in the light of experience that is gained in the first steps of the evolutionary process. From the capture of the idea to the creation of the sensual

reality it is a mix of ideas with experience in a form of continuous "becoming". Becoming is continuous evolution that also creates ideas. This process is "interrupted" by the architect at the point where he or she is satisfied with the results achieved and where conscious order has been reached.

## 2. The approach

Kant establishes the human mind as an active originator of experience rather than just a passive recipient of perception [7, p190]. Bergson argues that reality is the *becoming* of Ideas into experience [2, p 313]. Combining the theses of the two thinkers, one may discover that ideas and experience are interdependent and mutually related. Also Arnheim in [1, p.61] reaches the conclusion that: *the perception consists in the formation of tangible ideas*. This is true especially in Architecture and this is exhibited during the development of an architectural composition. It is therefore necessary to provide an environment for achieving both: allow ideas to come from experience and experiences to come from ideas, an environment for continuous evolution. The transmutation of ideas to experience and of the experience to ideas is the essence of architectural composition. This continuous creation process is terminated and not finished when the *willed* order in terms of Bergson [3] and/or the *structural* order in terms of Arheim [8] has been achieved at the free will of the Architect. This is the basic principle of the approach.

Creation of experience as a state of senses and creation of ideas as a state of mind that reflects experience is the objective to be achieved in creating space in architecture. This experience is to be understood as a derivative of the deep character of the architectural object to be composed led by the basic theme and a set of time dependant state characteristics, described here as the eigenvalues of the space. The eternal creation of ideas through experience and vice versa through continuous evolution in architecture leads to the creation of an environment that has as objective to spatialize or materialize time. Time is a kind of moving force that produces energy. This energy can be gradually stored so that it can be expended through canalization into different directions for producing experiences and further ideas that recommence the evolutionary cycle of the architectural com-

position. Kant considers the spatial relationships rather like mutual influences and interactions among the bodies and not simply reflections of qualitative information that are given in the context of a coexisting arrangement [7, p186]. Einstein goes in the similar direction when he insists that there is no space without a field, meaning of course field of forces [7]. Modern Physics goes so far as to assert that material shape is nothing but the man's way of seeing the effects of action of forces [5]. From the beginning, the cosmic architecture is viewed as being brought about by action [5]. All shapes are experienced as patterns of forces. In practical life a wall counts not only as a geometrical plane but as a boundary that contains, keeps out and covers. The dynamic view of the world corresponds to what is known about the objective state of the nature [5]. This is also true in the case of the architect relating to his or her subjective view.

Arnheim looks at the deduction principles when analysing existing architectural objects, but does not give a way or a method of how through the use of these principles the architect could arrive at creating objects creating targeted experiences. Even if he/she did, his/her way of thinking is based on the existence visually perceived elements and not in the mind (*Gemüt*) as an originator of this experience. A way to accomplish this would be to try in solving the problem of how to create experience *a priori*, i.e. experience before the final experience. Starting off the point of defining forces interrelationships, the architect will finally have to go through a series of steps that will allow him/her to gradually substitute the field of forces and their interrelationships through architectural elements that reconstruct the original sense of experience as a kind of an architectural *becoming* of an idea into experience in space. This process starts in practice of a mind activity (idea or *εἶδος* in Greek) about the architectural object to be created, as something outside of ourselves, continues as a fuzzy knowledge creation process, outside of any kind of sensing the transformation from the original idea and basic theme through to the final architectural object.

The process of gradual and methodical creation of *a priori* knowledge is based on the assumption that pure geometry alone cannot create experience unless is sensed as a pattern of forces [1] as accumulation and canalization of energy [3, p255]. Geometry may complement the design process for the final decision on the form of objects. For example the need to create the state of tension in a certain space, cannot be experienced singularly through the appearance or form of a certain architectural object. This could be achieved through conducting simple or more complex experiments in a physics lab, for example, for simulating situations where tension can undertake the build up of the *a priori* knowledge needed in the course of *becoming* the basic theme from the original idea to the final architectural object. It is described through a series of compositional steps, with the purpose to build up *a priori* knowledge on types of experiences and states that can be used for taking decisions in the designing process towards completing the architectural object. It is imaginable that states in space can be designed into new architectural objects by emulating objects in order to achieve specific dynamic effects in the space. From the results of such experiments, designers can be driven to perceive various ways in translating experience gained through experiments into architectural objects. Tools from the field of Systems Dynamics could be

used in order to emulate objects interdependencies with energy storage and flow elements [6]. The discussion and use of these tools in architectural composition is the theme of further research.

Creating *a priori* knowledge with respect to the final experience, it is realized that composition would have to produce, not just a structure of thought that is normally the architectural process of design, but the entire structure of consciousness within which perception also occurs. What is first given is appearance, when combined with consciousness [*Bewußtsein*] through experiment is called perception [*Wahrnehmung*]. It is the structure of consciousness, through synthesis, that turns "appearances" into architectural objects and perceptions. The process of architectural synthesis therefore brings in this way things into consciousness.

It is notable that for Kant, space is a condition for the possibility of experience itself [7, p190]. This holds also for space in architecture. Architectural space does not originate from the senses, but it is composed and created through the architect therefore enabling certain experience or in general a state of experience. Although not originated itself from the senses, the concept of space is a pure appearance, nor objective, neither real, but it is substantiated through a subjective design process of the architect who entails his identity, personality and maybe roots to his or her own creation. The "*end-product*" is a result of a creative evolutionary process, following an approach, through the gradual acquisition of knowledge (energy) of the type "*learning by a priori*" through experiments in order to emulate various types of space states. These space states will relate to the objectives of experience pursued by the architect. Below there is a brief description of the design steps: 1. *a posteriori* analytic, 2. *a priori* analytic, 3. *a priori* synthetic and 4. *a posteriori* synthetic.

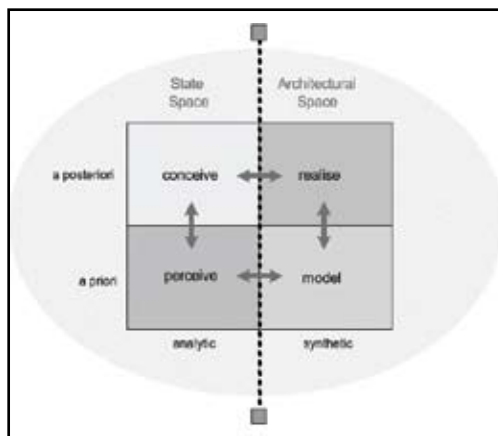


Fig. 1. From state space to architectural space

### 3. The method

The method distinguishes 4 phases: conceive, perceive, model and realise that are interconnected to form a whole of individual parts. Chronologically the method is characterised through the passage from the state space to the architectural space. The distinction in phases is only made only for methodological purposes.

**THE A POSTERIORI ANALYTIC PHASE:**

Conceive – It concerns the definition, and the analysis of the deep character of the object to be designed and how this deep character has to be substantiated. Based on this analysis the states of the space should be defined that the space itself should be mediating to the environment. The concern here is the psychological order and not so much the chronological. The psychological order is of major concern here that leads from elementary to more complex conceptions as the mind becomes more differentiated and observation more refined [1]. The mind passes from the individual to the whole. This step is called “*a posteriori*” with respect to experience and it constitutes the expected (*a posteriori*) essence of the object under design up front.

**THE A PRIORI ANALYTIC PHASE:**

Perceive – It concerns the gaining of knowledge through experimentation with forces in action and how these actions can be translated into shapes or forms based on the analysis of the previous step. Such experiments should be conducted in order to excite the imagination of the creator or the student. Here concepts take shape and are turned into *percepts* [1]. A percept is the resultant of perceiving. It is the representation of an external event that affected the senses and which - by perceptual processing - caused the activation of a certain category in the mind, i.e., the percept. Elements of the state space are formed so that these later in the next design phase to constitute the parts to form the whole. Arnheim's work, for example [1, 4] are important in the built up of the experiments. It is an area of further research to pursue such experiments in laboratories that can be built especially for the needs of architectural design. Such environments would probably be multidisciplinary, with architects, artists, art psychologists, physicists and mathematician with expertise in geometry.

**THE A PRIORI SYNTHETIC PHASE:**

Model – It concerns the synthesis of a 3-dimensional model of the object incorporating all the knowledge gained in the previous design phase. Here is the step where state space is substantiated into architectural space in the form of a model. During the modelling phase further experiments can be conducted if needed for further refinement of the model and perceptual assistance at the elementary level. The parts are composed into a whole. The whole is characterised from its parts and every part has its character belonging to the whole. It is a system.

**THE A POSTERIORI SYNTHETIC PHASE:**

Realise – It concerns the actual building of the object. It is expected that all objectives set in first phase of the design process have been met and it is only in this case that the design cycle has arrived at the end-point.

## 4. Summary

In this paper an approach of gradual gaining of a priori knowledge for sensing „*a posteriori*“ reality is proposed. The “end product” is a result of a deduction process, following a synthetic approach, through the gradual acquisition of knowledge of the type “learning a priori” through experiments in order to emulate various types of states. These states will relate

to the final objectives of experience pursued by the architect. Moreover the “becoming” character of design is exhibited that leads into a more systematic way for composing architectural space.

## 5. Further research

Design and execution of experiments can be conducted for gaining “a priori” knowledge on sensing “a posteriori” reality. Arnheim's work, for example [1, 4] are of great importance in the built up of the experiments proposed in this paper. It is definitely an area of further research to pursue such experiments in laboratories that can be built especially for the needs of architectural design. Furthermore, tools from the field of Systems Dynamics can be used in order to emulate objects interdependencies with energy storage and flow elements. Such environments would probably be multidisciplinary, with architects, artists, art psychologists, physicists and mathematician with expertise in geometry.

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# BUTOH PERFORMANCES IN SLOVENIA: PERCEPTION OF SPACE AND BODY, AND CULTURAL ANXIETY

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## Methods and goals

This research examines how the rise of global capitalism and the history of the Asian diaspora have shaped the political, economical, social and cultural interflows between Japan and other parts of the world (here Slovenia). A research focuses on the transnational influence of Japanese *butō* performance in contemporary Slovenian theatre, and looks at the significance of interculturalism between Japan and Slovenia that produces the paradigm-shifting means for understanding the political and cultural identity of contemporary Slovenia.

*Butō* performances in Slovenia displayed a dark ensemble of visions and movements of the sublime, but simultaneously exposed the political questions derived from intercultural arts exchanges: what, if any, are the limits and purposes to a culture-specific, Japanese stylized art form, such as *butō*, re-staging in Slovenia? What, if anything, is left or transformed of that intercultural exchange between Japan and Slovenia when Japanese culture is embodied and transposed upon the disciplined foreign body of white Slovene actors? In response to the above questions, this paper presents the ethnographic research that investigates the dynamics of the *butō* workshop and performance processes. The research deals with the transformation of Slovene performers, their perception of space and body in dance, the aesthetics and reception of *butō* performance by audience. By doing so, this research wishes to comprehend how that displaced and ready-made *butō* practice in Slovenia posits continual political struggle and cultural anxiety of and for national identities in the contemporary Slovene context.

To answer above questions it also necessary to explore what *butō* actually represents. For this reason I tried to find answers to the questions about the origins, development and essence of *butō*. The investigation of dance has been combined with the attempt to understand the perception of body and space in dance world. Spatial aspects of style may, however go along with modes of organization of dance, document characteristics of wider social organization. As dance exists in relation to space, we can consider some reflection on questions such as "What is the relation of dancing to the spatial environment in which it is performed?", "How might attention to spatial and body relationships between people inform our understanding?", "How might cultural conceptions of space and body differ from those of the researcher and be revealed through dancing?"

As a dancer who danced *butō* on seminar in Slovenia some years ago, I did use dance as an ethnographic method to research my theme. As an anthropologist and japonologist I have started my fieldwork with questioning Slovenian dancers, actors, choreographers performing *butō* and also Japanese dancer working and performing in Slovenia. I continued and developed my research with exploring some available literature on body, space and *butō*. With this kind of methodological approach I was looking for the relation between a dancer's personal understanding of body, space, dance technique and the perception of *butō* in society, where they work and perform.

## Body in space

The most significant change for anthropology in recent years is found in the acknowledgment that space is an essential component of socio-cultural theory. But spatial analyses have often neglected the body because of difficulties in resolving the dualism of the subjective and objective body, and distinctions between the material and representational aspects of body space. The concept of "embodied space", however, draws these disparate notions together, underscoring the importance of the body as a physical and biological entity, as lived experience, and as a centre of agency, a location for speaking and acting on the world. We use the term "body" to refer to its biological and social characteristics, and "embodiment" as an "indeterminate methodological field defined by perceptual experience and mode of presence and engagement in the world". Embodied space is the location where human experience and consciousness take on material and spatial form. Embodied space is presented as a model of understanding the creation of place through spatial orientation, movement, and language. (Low and Lawrence-Zúñiga 2003: 1-2)

The space occupied by the body and the perception and experience of that space, contracts and expands in relationship to a person's emotions and state of mind, sense of self, social relations, and cultural predispositions. In Western culture we perceive the self as "naturally" placed in the body, as a kind of precultural given. We imagine ourselves experiencing the world through our "social skin", the surface of the body representing "a kind of common frontier". (Low and Lawrence-Zúñiga 2003: 3)

The different view on the body shows Japanese philosopher Tetsurō Watsuji, when he argues that in the West mind 'I' is more important than 'body', and 'time' is more important than 'space'. But his view of the person emphasizes the space as the *basho* of human existence, thereby stressing the spatial existence of the body. (Yuasa 1987: 42) So spatial-consciousness had been regarded as more primary in the East, and the fundamental state of consciousness is the juxtaposition of momentary space-experience, temporally cut off from before and after, and in this view we may find the backdrop of a traditionally Japanese, or more generally Eastern, mode of thinking about the relationship between humanity and nature. (Yuasa 1987: 45)

Initially, the body's movements do not follow the dictates of the mind. The body is heavy, resistant to the mind's movement; in this sense, the body is an object opposing the living subject's mode of being. That is, the mind (or consciousness) and the body exhibit an ambiguous subjective-objective dichotomy within the self's mode of being. (Yuasa 1987: 105) By disrupting the binary mind/body by positionality and focusing on the situated and colonized body, states of mind become loosened from the location of social and spatial relationship. Pierre Bourdieu explains how body habits generate cultural features and social structure by employing the term *habitus* to characterize the way body, mind, and emotions are simultaneously trained. He uses this concept to understand how social status, moral values, and class position become embodied in everyday life. (Low and Lawrence-Zúñiga 2003: 3-4)

The process of accepting *habitus* into the body is unconscious process. It can be said that the reason for that is that people in the West forget that they/we are living in the body. With this statement agrees Tanja Zgonc, Slovenian dancer and choreographer, when she is saying "that we are lacking the basic knowledge for living in our body: an awareness of body movements and breathing. The main problem of the Western thought is that we are too much concerned of how the body looks outside; we are frustrated about our bodies". She then suggests that there are many ways of getting conscious of our body and she sees one of these methods in dancing, or more specifically in *buto*. (Puncer in Brumen 2003: 73)

For this reason it is very important to study the physical, sensuous experience of dancing, which can provide us with knowledge as unmistakable as that is provided by the more conventional study and analysis of cultural beliefs and concepts and of other aspects of emotional life. (Thomas 2003: 93). The interpretation of the 'act of dancing' from the performers' or the observers' points of view are not simply the product of personal preferences, but are constituted in and through our lived experiences in a variety of contexts and events, 'social and theatrical' (Thomas 2003: 94). The task of the dance analyst is to find 'ways to reveal and understand the webs of meaning created through the dance event' (ibid.).

Because dance does not exist in a cultural vacuum, but rather is a situated embodied aesthetic practice, it can also highlight and reflect the presence of this very dualism in the cultural domain. In addition, dance provides a rich set of resources for exploring the 'history of bodies', by examining technical shifts and transformations of dance styles in relation to the dancing bodies that perform them over a period of time

and moving around the world. Furthermore, it provides a site for examining the limitations and extraordinary possibilities of 'the physical body'. (Thomas 2003: 93)

## Butō

Japanese society cultivates a special attitude to the body and they use body language much more than verbal language. The body is therefore a frequent theme in contemporary theoretical and philosophical discussions in Japan, a theme that emerged in the context of social and technological changes. The special attitude to the body in Japanese society can be seen in many phenomena: wrapping the body in a kimono as a way of exchanging information with other people, in the philosophy of martial arts, which developed a special regime for the body with emphasis on the body's non-verbal training, thought and spiritual power. This special attitude to the body is also evident in the theatre and dance techniques, which developed in Japan, for instance in ritual dances, folk dances, ballet and modern dances. As part of modern dance, *butō* represents modern body expression; it is neither dance nor theatre, but a special technique of blending body and mind into a uniform entity in motion.

*Butō* dance is a performing art that originated in Post World-War Japan and was first performed in 1959. As an avant-garde dance form, *butō* has its origins in the dancers Hijikata Tatsumi and Ōno Kazuo, who collaborated and developed distinct styles of *butō*. In contrast to the rhythm and balance of ballet, *butō* emphasizes discontinuity and imbalance, bends the body into strange and awkward postures, and avoids the imposition of fixed technique. Yet *butō* demonstrates certain continuities with classical Japanese dance: slowly flowing ground-related movement, asymmetry of poses and avoidance of strict rhythm. It is a contemporary form of dance that has little to do with either traditional Japanese dances or most western forms of dance, although it does borrow elements from some of each.

*Butō* presents challenges to rationality, conventional aesthetics and social norms: it portrays eroticism and violence, the embarrassing and the ugly, wasteland and alien worlds. Some *butō* performers work with disabled people and in mental hospitals, appropriating unconventional movements for the dance. The white face paint used in *kabuki* is often used over almost naked body in *butō*. Visual images are paramount, typically portraying agony and ecstasy, distortion and the grotesque. There is exploration of the boundaries between life and death, human and animal, male and female. Dwelling on boundaries, however, confirms their significance: the juxtaposition of multiple transgressions may ironically, in Durkheim style, reinforce the normality operative beyond the compartmentalized sphere of art. (Valentine 1998: 273)

It is not only performance, but also the embodiment of one of the most precise critical spirits in the history of the consciousness of the body, with strength of thought, which impinges deeply on the history of human spirit. Still, there are certain ideas that constellate around *butō*. One is the concept of the *empty body*. This refers to an opening up of space in the body to allow yourself room to *be moved*. For some artists, the result is a very depersonalised form of *butō*. One of them, Min Tanaka says, "I do not dance in the space; I dance the space," suggesting that the impulse for his dance is not coming from ego or self. (Hermon 2003)

The most unconventional aspect of *butō* is its movement and the preparation that the dancer undergoes to prepare for the dance. It is a dance that has as much to do with meditation or martial art training as it does to dance in the conventional sense. It derives its power from what the individual who dances it brings to it in a very mental as well as physical sense. It is a directing of energy to the audience from the surroundings, the environment and the audience themselves as much as from the mind. (Hermon 2003)

The causes for the origin of *butō* may be found in the social and political environment of post-war Japan, and it was above all an expression of opposition to the fast modernisation and rigid traditions of Japanese society. *Butō* at first saw the body as a raw matter, freed completely of society's regulations and rules that hold the modern body captive. Gradually, this raw bodiness was replaced by symbolical and idealised presentations and performances of the human body as we can see them today. From its initial rebellious phase, *butō* passed to a phase of searching for symbols of the Japanese body, its pristine nature, rituality and today it has become a global dance technique that no longer represents subversive states nor radicalism. Though *butō* wanted to revolt and move away from traditionalism, it can be best described as a mixture of elements from the traditional Japanese theatres *no* and *kabuki* and modern expressive dance and mimics. It departs from established dance rules and leaves the body a lot of leeway for improvisation. As such it has become a postmodern art form that stages the story of a society in its own way.

### **Butō in Slovenia; Performances as cultural documents, cultural anxiety**

The political, economical and cultural status and condition of Slovenia change in early 1990 with independence from Yugoslavia. A result of that was extensive cultural exchange with other world, West and East. Because of the drastic changes in world economy and capitalism, consequences of migration of the people and mixing of the cultures are something that we see in our everyday life. For this reason we can not make clear distinguish between East and West in contemporary world anymore. Therefore we should consider about this phenomenon more as distinguished hybrid representations, and in this group of representation I would put *buto*. Although we try to avoid a discourse between 'us' and 'them', the ideological reality invades also in the field of dance art (Puncer 2003: 69).

The early 90ies were also the time when *butō* was brought in Slovenia by dancer and choreographer Tanja Zgonc, who has encountered it in Vienna in 1987. From 1989 she is a member of European dance group 'Ko Murobushi Dance Company'. She studied the *butō* method with leading Japanese teachers like Kazuo Ōno, Min Tanaka, Ko Murobushi, Tadashi Endo and Carlotta Ikeda. She teaches Scene movement at the Theater Academy (AGRFT) in Ljubljana. She dances many modern dance techniques, but Japanese *butō* is method, on which her working processes and choreographies are leaned. Tanja Zgonc has in last 15 or 16 years created about thirteen<sup>1</sup>

independent performances and was awarded with the National Slovenian award for culture, the Prešern award, for her performance *Koora* in 2002. (Puncer and Brumen 2003: 70–72)

She explains the situation like that: "Since the first *butō* performance in Ljubljana (Slovenia) in 1990, the perception of dancers and spectators' has change noticeable. A method of *butō* was integrated in Slovenian theatre for the first time, when the Slovenian actor Radko Polič used *butō* in the play *Don Huan na psu*, directed by Dušan Jovanovič, in Ljubljanska drama. Since that time the interest for *butō* performances has grown among Slovenian audience and also between dancers and actors, and one of the results is also shown in increase number of performances and participants in *butō* workshops."

Although it is more than 15 years that *butō* is present in Slovenia, it is still a dance technique strange to our perception, it was not a part of our *habitus* before. As it uses techniques of movements which derive from other cultural and philosophical background, it acquires wider range of understanding of cultural phenomena from the dancer and the spectators. But it is also true, that *butō* in Slovenia is not just something that came from Japan anymore. It became independent method, which is developing in Europe and other places of the world. *Butō* method itself was first just dance-theatre method, but in the foreign countries it is placing itself in psycho-social therapeutic work with people. (Puncer and Brumen 2003: 73)

The people who are interested in *buto* are mostly dancers and actors. As actress Mojca Funkl says: "This method is very useful also in other non-*buto* performances, you can use the perception of the body and self in the theatrical plays, it helps to understand better the way you move and act. It is clear that *butō* gives our culture philosophy of Zen and consciousness of body and mind. For this reason it is sometimes difficult to understand it, especially if you practice it only for a short time." In this quotation we can see one more difference between *butō* outside the Japan and its origin. In some places of Japan people still lives in traditional *butō* way: that is they live, eat and dance together, and not only go on practice or workshop for four hours a day and only a definite period. Merely imitating the physical movement that one sees on a videotape or from a seat in a theatre will most likely lead to a dance that may seem different, unusual and interesting to someone who has never seen the dance before, but which is hollow and uninteresting to one who has experienced *butō* performance up close or has gone through the process of preparing for and carrying out a performance of *butō*. The learning of *butō* is never ending process, a task for a whole life. But Mojca Funkl here ads: "with our different way of creating and living we give *butō* new dimensions and new themes."

Within European modern dance this method is like mental process, through which individual would be confronted with his/her 'otherness'. But *butō* is about the human experience, not the Japanese experience. *Butō* is rather a part of one's understandings of the spiritual and intellectual inspiration to those who brought it to the stage. From this points out we can say that to perform *butō* in Slovenia is something different than to perform it in Japan or in other countries

<sup>1</sup> Performances: choreographer Tanja Zgonc: V pot vpet (1989), Pot (1991), Iiza Iiza, haiku (Sem, kar sem, nič več, nič manj) (1994), Haus (1995), Manover 95 (1995), Mankind 3 (1996), Hiša (1997/98), Kagami odsev (2000), Koora (2002), Koan Kensho (2005); choreographer: Stefan Maria Marb: Golem III (2005).

<sup>2</sup> Translation: Don Huan on his beam-ends (N.V.)

around the world. Each *butō* dance is unique to the person who dances it. For no one can create the same dance feeling inside that any other dancer has already felt. The 'magic' of this dance then is in the ability of the individual to push away all that is unnecessary to the expression of the feeling in the dance. This shows other issue, that is: the audience cannot usually discern what this internal image is - nor they should. The spectators read their own story in the actions, what *butō* dancers feel, when they are dancing before different audience. I assume that as a person lives in one society and embody it, *butō* expresses the relation between perceptions of space and body in certain society.

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## THE MEDIA EXISTENCES: POST-INDIVIDUALISM AND IMAGINATION

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We live in the era of imagination, in which all past "reality", technically-conceptually mediated up to the limits of possible experience, and almost totally vanished in imaginative sensual phenomena, has been transformed into illusion as existence. The principle of reality coherence, which even Descartes, in his *Meditationes de prima philosophia* accepted as relevant evidence for differentiating realities (i.e. state of wake and consciousness) from the sphere of dreams, in the contemporary world – both in science, technique, arts, and common sense observations and atrophied, basically by senses disoriented thinking – has been seriously shaken by new aesthetics and erotic experiences available at the Internet, mobile phones and global entertainment industry. That neo-mystical, collective experience gathered on new aesthetic-erotic territories, electronic zones of senses and sensitivity, almost at the edge of delirium, represents the *imaginary* as pure immanence, late internalization of views, in which the era of fullness and emptiness are pulsing parallelly and alternately like mere echoes of only and one world of general elation, trance and illusion produced by the media.

Similar to cultural forms characteristic for societies preceding capitalistic production, and for which, as Jameson put it, myths and rituals present some kind of "magical narratives" in post capitalist production formations, former civil individualism, with its immanent "autonomy" and psychology of subjectivity, is more and more replaced by practice of some fragmented, totally objected togetherness, which is seen as daily synthesis of knowing and acting. In the introductory chapter of the article "Marxism as a critic" (that deals with Jameson's contribution to modern critic theories of society), it is stressed out a special role in adaptation of traditional Marxist theories to challenges of modern times, and it is underscored possibility of applying critic to so-called "media based capitalism", while "dialectical critic" is always, regarded from a phenomenological point of view, as Jameson in *Marxism and form* claims, "holistic" and "totalizing".<sup>2</sup>

Related to this, it could be posed a question – on which kind of magic is founded this "media based capitalism"? It seems that one of the answers is hidden in effective role of marketing nowadays. Brands, which are products of mass (re)production of "real" illusions in the fields of marketing, through actions of mass media communication, take on magical features of consumption and goods, making an "aura" of trade mark attractive to the extend which in the past possessed an authentic piece of art. In this way, a controversial phenomenon of desaturization of modern art, which in the essay "Work of Art in the Era of Technical Reproduction" anticipated Walter Benjamin, today coincides with Bodriarian chained hyper reality of illusion, and also with "mechanical" (media) processes of "sacralisation of commercialism", which is described in detail in the text "On the Aura, Illusion, Escape and Hope in Apocalyptic Consumption"<sup>3</sup> in the compilation *Apocalypse and Marketing*.

Department stores, modern shopping malls, mega market-cinemas and teleshop programs, for a modern consumer represent former worlds of fairy tales, desires and dreams, the worlds of miracles of Alice and Pinocchio, some sort of a "cathedral of consumption" with characteristic "grandiose stage set" in whose luminous windows is exposed seductive goods. "Those seductions with goods represent", claims Belk, "concentrated power of marketing in new and magnificent department store windows",<sup>4</sup> which coupled with mass advertising makes actual processes of "modernization of magic".<sup>5</sup> Referring to Raymond Williams, who advertising labeled as magic system of attributing power to goods, Belk points out: "At the beginning of nineteenth century branded goods was not common (...). Like a bagman goods and presentation of miraculous remedies which preceded it, branded goods has been developed in miraculous elixir the moment it was successfully mystified and mythologized with help of advertising (...). That's why transcendent power, that long before was attributed to religion and first rate art, now we find alive and healthy in branded, advertised, exposed consumer's products. Aura, for which Benjamin feared that was lost, instead of vanishing, it made significant

<sup>1</sup> Nick Heffernan, Fredrik Jameson, in: *Contemporary Critical Theorists*, From Lacan to Said, edited by Jon Simons, Edinburgh University Press, Edinburgh, 2004, p. 252.

<sup>2</sup> See chapter "Towards dialectic critic", in: Fredrik Jameson, *Marxism and Form*, Dialectic theories of the XX century literature, Nolit, Belgrade, 1974, especially p. 310.

<sup>3</sup> Rassel W. Belk, "On aura, illusion, escape and hope in apocalyptic consumption", in: *Apocalypse and marketing: Eschatology, escapology and illusion of the end* (editors: Stephen Brown, Jim Bell, David Carson), Clio, Beograd, 2003, pp. 107-130.

<sup>4</sup> Ibid, pp. 114, 115.

<sup>5</sup> Ibid, p. 115.

turn towards mass produced, mass marketed, mass meditated consumer culture.<sup>6</sup> Transcendental imagination in this way becomes used as prerequisite of opportunity of entire empirical reality (i.e. its media reflection), to put it in Kantian terminology, if this conclusion can be applied to today's world of media culture.

Simultaneously with losing the aura, generally speaking, from the world of culture vanishes all that in former times was unique and unrepeatable and it is replaced by cliché standards of goods and actual planetary brandocracy. It is unquestionable that this process of deaurisation (and following "denarratisation" that, technically speaking, acting in the realm of visual art as an actual process was prepared in the époque of Renaissance and today taken and developed by the Internet, is treated as "discontinue narrative space") have made possible former market globalization and total acting of media images that are systematically spread over the modern world. Antiglobalisation and anticorporate resistance spirit strive to oppose such processes through forms of acting that are revolutionary, guerilla in the traditional senses (from Che Guevara<sup>7</sup> to Naomi Klein, for example), and through using new forms of fight in virtual contexts of acting (movements of Mexican Zapatists and other aspects of media practice that constituted new resistance identities).

However, it appears that nowadays, culture, arts, aesthetics and erotic, that substitute fetishism of goods, brandomania and entirely totalitarian pornography, by losing its former magic features, or auraticity, dwell in some other realms taken out from boundaries of traditional polarities of villages and cities, the poor and the rich, the Third World and postindustrial civilization of the West (North America and the European Union). More and more frequently time is spent in so-called chat rooms, various virtual communities based on interests, even *cyber towns*, become more and more present forms of modern existence that is no longer (critically) question, this is an obvious fact. To this especially contribute the "nature" of the Internet as a media, which is, according to views of some modern theoretician of culture and media (Taylor and Saarinen, for example), structurally closed to the nature of female erotism and its "soft" and dislocated expression along "horizontales" of endless *cyber* space while, according to other opinions (Baudrillard), this space, according to its "qualities", is transsexually and erotically indifferent ("cyber indifference of sex") although intentionally seductive, and eventually based on the paradigm of the "fragile subject" (female body) and its surface erogenous zones.

Descartes' *cogitatio*, as past (self) confirmation of existence ("male" and transcendent/al/ly) subject, with its possibility to yet, at the end, verify something beyond it (*res cogitans*), in these cases loses some of immediate self seeing through – penetration and base. Media mediated, dependent from the Other / Others, a-

rational and technically reproductive, *cogitatio* becomes, colloquially said, pure ego-trip, phantasmagoria free from self-characteristic subjective powers as well as possibility of continual process of self founding. On the other hand, it is important to stress out that in works that treat themes of "outer world" in the speculative way, dealing with general problems of the visual<sup>8</sup> Descartes in his later research introduces discussion about natural phenomena such as light, rainbow and other optical phenomena that belong to the field of empirical visions generated from the domain of possibilities of "natural geometry" or, as is later on renamed, intelligible text<sup>9</sup>.

Since natural phenomena, taken over from modern technology and dragged through filters of mass media aesthetic culture, in speculative visage stay the same while empirically they become a foundation of illusion production, it can be concluded that already from Descartes and beginning of the modern age rationalism it was settled a theoretical condition for transcendence of subject, through reality that is expressed as hyper real, in the empirical realm of interpretation. That's why no wonder that every question concerning fundaments for establishing a modern media ontology ends up either in radical social critique (Frankfurt school, Anders, Debord, etc.) or in theological speculations on existence of God as a media phenomenon, that were postulated in Leibniz' *Monadologie* and Berkeley's principle of perception as existential foundation. Autonomy of visual form and omnipresent "madness of vision" (*la folie de la vision*) about which later on wrote Merleau-Ponty and other French commentators who therapeutically act in the filed of perception phenomenology, from there on become substitute for modern views on subjectivity and its *per se* schizoid auto reflection.

On capitalism and pathologically split subjectivity of the mechanical world of desires, thought in modern psycho-analytical code, enough was said in Deleuze-Guattari's *Anti-Edip*. If we add to this how matters look like with reflection of external, so-called permeable things (synthesized in continual *res extensa*) that represent an old, entirely recognizable Cartesian thinking matrix. Referring to Leeman's differentiation between mirror metaphor used by Rationalism and compatible reflective perspectivism, Martin Jay, in his comments and allusions to Descartes, underlies acting effects of common and so called "anamorphous" baroque mirrors in which distortions of visual images are deliberate and obvious, resulting in particular visual practice significant for both baroque and illusionism of our age.<sup>10</sup>

Global complexity of the phenomenon which, on one side is represented by media capitalism and on the other by new "global mess" (in one, baroquely constructed, irregular paradigm of moving of these processes), whether we consider radical resistance of Zapatists or terrorism of Al Qaeda, in the era of late capitalism development and activation of various social movements that also strive to act through global media networks, new forms of (aesthetic) existence are emerging, as well as understanding former nature of subjectivity. Forming one's own identity today is realized simultaneously with involving in network communication.

<sup>6</sup> Ibid, p. 115.

<sup>7</sup> It has passed over 40 years since Ernesto Che Guevara, in his speech at the conference in Punta del Este (1961), attempted to unmask the American plan of implementation of certain (desirable and "progressive") cultural model for all Latin American countries. In that speech he made the following point: "... they are attempting, distinguished delegates, to establish a cultural common market, organized, managed, paid for and domesticated. All the culture of (Latin) America will be at the service of imperialism's propaganda plans, to demonstrate that hunger of our peoples isn't hunger at all, but laziness. Magnificent!... Confronted with this, we reply (with)... total and absolute condemnation... (This is) an attempt by imperialism to domesticate the one thing that our peoples had saved from disaster: our national culture." U: Che Guevara, *Global Justice, Liberation and Socialism* (Edited by Maria del Carmen Ariet Garcia), Ocean Press, Melbourne, New York, 2004, str. 13.

<sup>8</sup> It is known that Descartes wrote his *Tractate on Method* as some kind of an epistemological introduction in his later works on optics, meteorology and geometry. See, for example, Descartes, "La Dioptrique" in: *Discours de la Méthode*, Garnier-Flammarion, Paris, 1966.

<sup>9</sup> Martin Jay, "The Noblest of the Senses: Vision from Plato to Descartes" (Chapter one), in: *Downcast Eyes, The Denigration of Vision in Twentieth-Century French Thought*, University of California Press, Berkeley, Los Angeles, London, 1994, p. 51.

<sup>10</sup> Compare. *ibid*, p. 48.

Messages that derive from the act of writing itself (*e-mail* or *chat*) construct both identity of the Network user and space in which are formed different virtual *online* communities that constitute special *net worlds*. That is, digitally produced personas, potentially immortal virtual avatars, moving of "souls" from one to other media existence, and all other *cyber* phenomena that occupy today's electronic and net world present some kind of technologically constituted metaphysical doubles (*cyber*-replica of act of *in vitro* insemination, cloning and the like) or multiple individualities ("borderline personas", metamorphosis of humanoid beings into monsters according to the model of Ovidius's and Bosch's ideas that hardly preserve within itself remnants of former paradigm of both subjective and intersubjective acting. Actual cybernetic engineering and various opportunities for software creations in "reality" of nonexistent personas and identities, contributed to making of virtual characters of artists like computer images, models and promoters of new cosmetic products, and movie silicones, popular TV stars and journalists, etc.

This implies that such attempts of constructing identities accompany and turn over subject – object relation, where media mediated intersubjectivity becomes entirely constitutive for analogue of empirical subject defined as unknown in *cyber* space and time. Coinciding of subject and object, their failing into one during structuring process of interactive computer networks occurs in a technologically described space as reduced communicative interaction. To be perceived as communicative act in the context of a totally "democratized" communication process, displaced in regions of so called "collective identities", presents a necessary precondition for articulating all kinds of subjectivities, thought in contemporary time. This is also an empirical confirmation of Habermas's idea of subjectivity as communicative acting which is established through processes of affirmation of "self consciousness" that takes place in an empirical space and is displayed as significantly different communicative aesthetics or media practice of postindustrial age.

This process could be also viewed from other, transcendental angle, assuming that new technologies or, above all, electronic media and Internet which comes logically before and independently of experience, are therefore possibility of experience itself. In this way in our time the media would become self-centered carriers of sphere of subjectivity, i.e. subjectivity as it is, as Adorno and Horkheimer in *Dialektik der Aufklärung* anticipated to be true for all industry of culture. Objective sphere of mind would be presented, in this regard, as a complex world of interactions between individuals and machines or machines themselves, as well as transitory forms between human beings and machines, about what often wrote Virilio, claiming in his essays that our (possible) experience is, in fact, teleobjective, not given objectively.

And while social psychologists, philosophers and aestheticians, theoreticians of media and culture, and other analytics of modern time identified this phenomenon, that was remarkably manifested in the second half of XX century in its various phenomenal forms (fashion, new life styles, redesigning socio-cultural, art and religious movements, and mediated by expansion of media culture and its consumers derivatives), as "individualism" with collective omen, describing in that way prevalence of "narcissistic" culture over others (Christopher Lasch, Pierre Bourdieu, Gilles Lipovetsky and other authors), individualism, read in the code of interactive collectivities, suffered further changes, viewed in the exploring media context.

Dialectic process of individualization, which in this moment of Otherness and alienation ends up in anonymous drawing of individuals in some institutional discourse established earlier, and most often callous, followed by a more or less obvious aura transformation ranging from former institutions of sociality *par excellence* to simple media "harismaticity" where former "subject" *post festum* became mere predicate of media-consumers aura), almost completely assimilated by poor universe of magic consumerism. Referring to Gauchet's views of modern relations of individuals and society, Lipovetsky states: "When individual is no longer means of some external purpose, he is rather considered and he considers himself as ultimate purpose, social institutions lose their divine aura, which all stem from some unquestioned transcendence (...)".<sup>11</sup> Transcendence in that way becomes immanence, while its magic aura vanishes, transforming itself into sheer representation of true individuality, authenticity and unrepeatability, which in that way is both realized and annulled.

Therefore, the phenomenon of post individualism, and the world of media programmed illusion matrix which belongs to it, presents the last consequence of individualization work process, or pseudo-individualization of civil society, which its dialectic motion and fulfillment finishes in hibernated state of abstract network-electronic collectives. But, "motion" of these collectives, in its entire dialectical changeability and ambivalence, becomes part of general simulative processes of desalination, which is lately manifested through acting of different social and art movements as well as the whole media counter culture. For some theoreticians of information culture, process of individualization, considered within the zone of collectivity, cannot be completed until community utopian ideas are realized, in which alternative worlds, organized in different *cyber* movements and entities, will be possible or realized.

Manuel Castells, in his views stated in the second part of his extensive trilogy on information age, refers to Giddens's characterization of social processes related to identity building in late phase of modernity, which results in forming a new sort of network society that processes of identity construction bring to challenges of "new forms of social change".<sup>12</sup> Moreover, Castells, in his observations on individualism, constructed and realized in network constituted communities of the modern age, establish a new theoretical paradigm contemplated in the context of preparatory actions for accomplishing concrete social changes. Comprehensive elaboration of various sources that indicate possibilities of articulating resistance to techno-economically globalized world should, in Castells's case, demonstrate all differences of alternative projects of social organization, as well as more or less network structured resistance movements, which in its specific way demonstrates that "different world is possible".<sup>13</sup> In final remarks of the second tome the author states that actual "project identities", differing from earlier times, this term associated with civil society and industrial era, developed in "resistance identities which affects formation of so called new historical subjects".<sup>14</sup>

<sup>11</sup> Gilles Lipovetsky, *Age of emptiness*, Essays on modern individualism, Književna zajednica Novog Sada, 1987, pp. 186, 187.

<sup>12</sup> See: Manuel Castells, *The Information Age: Economy, Society and Culture Volume II, The Power of Identity*, Second Edition, Blackwell Publishing, UK, 2004, p. 11.

<sup>13</sup> Comp. Manuel Castells, "Preface and Acknowledgments 2003", *ibid*, p. xvii.

<sup>14</sup> See: Manuel Castells, "Conclusion", *ibid*, p. 422.

Thus, the term individuality, as understood in the civil society of the XX century, lost its importance in regard to power of an individual, because real historical space is substituted by virtual space while the framework for historical acting is spread on virtual movements and communities that all together mask a heterogeneous resistance scene, a radically subjective, empirical action plan. Nevertheless, this specific communicative practice is possible only due to sphere of transcendental subjectivity which is, in this case, the entire media space. Empirical acting in virtual space, in reverse, may affect and be effective in so called "real" space, as an application and realistic extension of virtual (inter)action. But, here also action tactics are different and vary from theory to theory and from one case to other.

A part from hacker's activism and attempts of radical acting both in media and modern social practice (and these two practices often are compatible), whether virtual anarchism or terrorism, individuals or organized groups and movements are taken into consideration, new media, and Internet in particular, make possible another form of resistance which engage individuals, who can confirm civil duties in virtual space as *truth* with their own bodies. Model for civil protest, articulated in this sense of word, presents Gandian method of peaceful resistance, which is promoted in the book about cyborg-citizens by K. H. Gray, who claims that it is possible to give evidence on truth through one's own body.<sup>15</sup> Logic of protest should be presented in a way that it makes sense to the public, whether it is regarded use of theatre, some other form of spectacle or media for this purpose. That makes, at the same time, the essence of the author's argumentation that supports non violent approach to social changes.

Combination of old and new technologies of citizens' will protests and demonstrations, from Czechoslovakia's "velvet revolution", supported from outside by computers and network interactions, through continual critical acting of the *Bread and Puppets Theater*,<sup>16</sup> to formation of so called "flash mobs" – most often this means "activism" of youth or, more precisely, student population – lately, they prepare their mass performances illegally and perform throughout the world, questioning the civil world in which prevails consumerism and existentially colored boredom<sup>17</sup>, supporting the substitution that has already happened. That is to say, in all these cases, direct communication face to face is replaced by particular live bodily exhibitions (action: "love carpet", etc.), or body circulation *on line*. In this latter example, however, need for returning into primal sensual immediacy of communication is obvious, it is prepared by the media and fully perform in "real" time and space.

Anonymous mob of citizens that participate in protest organized through Internet and cellular phones (SMS), doesn't present any historical subject of change nor individual resistance action of (self conscious) citizens, or civil movements in the former sense of the word. This *cyber-mob*, made of mere Internet acquaintances, is neither subject nor object of possible changes, but it doesn't present any collectivity without features (such as communicability, creativity, specific group dynamics and giving some kind of articulated resistance to consumers society of boredom). Basically, it is characterized, which on the first sight seems contradictory, by almost total absence of self conscience defined in the former sense of the term (if our interpretation excludes leaders and creators of events as well as programmers of introductory media activities, and their confrontation with police, in specific *cyber-actions* that preceded street and square events, *here and now*).

Thus, collective awareness (or self awareness) gives up its place to acting of one kind of networked body (self)awareness, which is acquired in new conceptual phrase of "intelligent mob" that uses this movement as its implicit, performance ideology. Collectivity in this way loses self awareness but acquires "intelligence" as particular bodily characteristic immanent to the media world. This, at the same time, could be a response/rebellion of modern time in regard to the world of interactive events and technologies, by subversive usage of their own potential for tactic acting or resisting modern corporative slavery and long ago established mass-media control (of unconscious). However, as we are talking about that, we are already beyond "humane" values that are, as Virilio claims, entirely destroyed during mass ethnic and ecological catastrophes such as Ausvic and Hiroshima<sup>18</sup>, technological production of mass mortality, surely the most monstrous patent of the XX century. Moreover, it could be said that this trend continues in acting of radical youth movements such as *skinheads*, that today appear within mass media matrix of pop culture or are activated in the Internet space on exhibitions promo-sites or deliberately sent direct mail that endlessly circulates and "supervises" reality itself.<sup>19</sup>

Interaction of "intelligent bodies" in imaginary space – this is a brief description of new practice of emerging civil *cyber* society. Self awareness is here connected with entities of flash mobs, tautologies of plural personas as well as bodily intelligibility and aestheticism of network world which makes one with its collective unconsciousness, while medium of realization presents ahistorical, transhumane horizon of techno-imagination in the game of bizarre objects. Media existences, therefore, are nothing else than self-awareness as coordinated message; old regime in a new matrix; circulation of loneliness, madness and unfreedom; brand as it is.

<sup>15</sup> See: Chris Hables Gray, *Cyborg Citizen*, Politics in the Posthuman Age, Routledge, New York and London, 2001, p. 44.

<sup>16</sup> Ibid.

<sup>17</sup> "Flash Mobs" phenomenon appeared as a cyber-replica to global corporative world of entertainment, although without primary intention to act politically or have some commercial purpose. *Mobbers' Movement* was officially established in New York in mid 2003, and first actions were inspired by an twenty-eight-year old American who comes from the world of "industry of culture". Principles of movement's acting are based on the Internet surfer's gatherings throughout the planet who, by transmitting e-mail messages "from hand to hand" or spreading information through sending messages via mobile phone (SMS), organize various social (artistic) actions in real surroundings (America and Europe), with basic purpose to establish direct communication within performance group, i.e. "intelligent mob". For more information on this, visit <http://www.flashmob.com>.

<sup>18</sup> See: Paul Virilio, *Sajbrsvet, politika na najlošoto*: conversation with Filip Peti, Alef, Skopje, 2003, p. 80.

<sup>19</sup> It is indicative, in this sense, an example of transformed space for acting of B.S.S. members (Bevara Sverige Svenskt / Leave Sweden to Swedish People) which is founded in the eighties with characteristic racial sign of their political acting. It is interesting that one of the members of this movement was Ulf, ex member of at time well known Swedish pop group "Ace of Base". Since the movement was allegedly crushed and their political actions in Sweden were stopped, its destructive acting continued in *cyber* space through sending threatening e-mail messages from nonexistent addresses to people (Jewish, Roma, Russians, Serbs and others) who applied for longer stay in the country. Content of the message indicate terminology mixture of radical political discourse and marketing slogans characteristic for the end of the last century: "We are happy you will never receive permission to stay forever in Sweden. So, let Sweden be your enemy, and your enemy will be Sweden".

## VERNACULAR ARCHITECTURE IN THE MEDITERRANEAN

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When I spoke at the 2<sup>nd</sup> Mediterranean Conference on Aesthetics, held at Carthage in Tunisia, in March 2003, I had argued that in the house types that have developed in circum-

Mediterranean lands, from Classical Antiquity – Greek and Roman – to the present day, a common architectural element is frequently encountered, the atrium.<sup>1</sup> That is, the centrally placed courtyard, around which the main and the ancillary spaces of the house are arranged. Many examples of this type have been identified in Classical Athens and in ancient Greek cities of Asia Minor, as well as in Roman cities. What is particularly important, however, is that the atrium occurs in Athens in Christian and much more recent times, as for example in vernacular houses in the neighbourhood of Plaka in the nineteenth century, just as it is found in houses at Medina in Tunis or even in Morocco and Andalusia.

I believe that it is clear that the mild climatic conditions prevailing in the Mediterranean allow people to live outdoors for large parts of the year. I also believe that it is equally clear that the organization of social and family life must have led to this house type, which was invented by Mediterranean peoples, whether pagans, Christians or Muslims.

In addition to this particular house type, study of vernacular settlements mainly of later times, has revealed the existence of several other common elements.<sup>2</sup> For example, similar ways of organization of such settlements and/or their incorporation in the natural environment can be ascertained, primarily in the Aegean islands, where these settlements develop on the slopes of a hill topped by a castle or a fortified monastery. Reasons of security obviously led the inhabitants to build their houses around the fortress, which could offer them protection from enemy attack. And striking to my mind is the similarity between the Chora (main village) of Astypalaia, island in the Dodecanese (fig. 1a), and the settlement of Almuncar (fig. 1b) or of Casares in Spain.

In all three cases a mighty castle protects the settle-

ment that spreads around it on the hillsides. The Chora of Patmos, another island in the Dodecanese, is a comparable example, protected by the fortified monastery of St John the Theologian.

Of interest in all these cases is the great difference in scale between the walls of the fortress, which dominates the general picture of the settlement, and the surrounding small cuboid houses, which indeed seem to follow a common type. A difference that is accentuated further by the different texture and the different colour of the haughty walls of the fortress, in contrast to the humble whitewashed homes of the inhabitants. These are the elements that express most directly the different functions and the dialogue that is developed between them, while simultaneously leading to an extremely beautiful result.

Another interesting element is the way in which settlements that grow freely – that is without need of protection from hostile assaults – are organized either side of a central thoroughfare of a settlement, which ends at the most important building – landmark, that is the church, whose presence is further emphasized by its size and tall bell-tower.

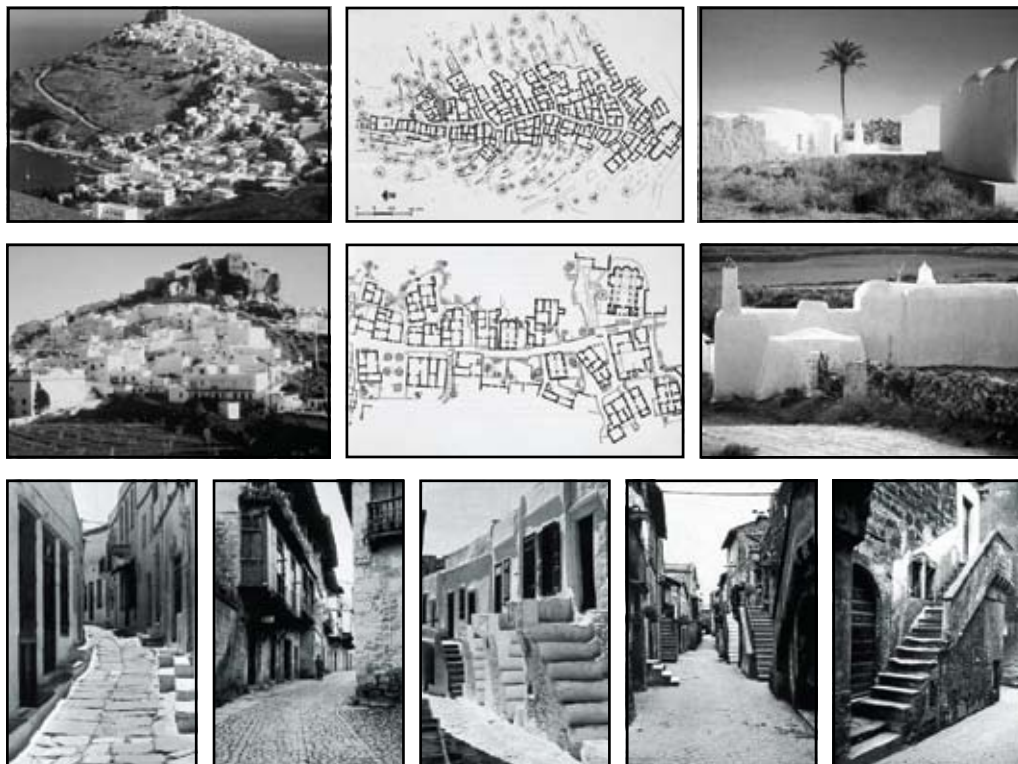
The examples of Artallo (fig. 2a) in Liguria, Italy, and of Apollonia (fig. 2b) on the island of Siphnos in the Cyclades, are characteristic and very interesting.<sup>3</sup> Of course, depending in each case on local circumstances, the terrain, the orientation or the accesses, the vernacular settlements of the Mediterranean are also constituted in different ways. Mountain settlements develop differently from lowland settlements or island ones, as those we have seen attest. Nevertheless, in each case there is an obvious tendency towards high-density building and the creation of a cohesive whole.

Thus, one house is "stuck" – we could say – to the next or is built very close to the neighbouring house, creating a picture of propinquity, of intentional contact that tends to obliterate or at least to limit the differences between the individual units, which in any case have many common elements, and probably to emphasize the end result. Indeed, I would say that some social dimension must also exist here. That is, something akin to egalitarianism between the in-

<sup>1</sup> Dionysis A. Zivas, The atrium, a common living space for the peoples of the Mediterranean, in *Espaces et Memoires, ATEP and Maghreb Diffusion*, Tunis 2005, p. 21-25.

<sup>2</sup> V.I. Atroshenko and Milton Grundy, *Mediterranean Vernacular, A vanishing architectural tradition*, Anness Publishing, London 1991.

<sup>3</sup> E. Guidoni, *L'architettura popolare Italiana*, Editori Laterza, Roma – Bari, 1980 and A. Tzakou, *The central settlements of Siphnos*, Athens 1970.



**Fig. 1a:** The settlement of Chora, on Astypalaia, in the Dodecanese

**Fig. 1b:** The settlement of Almunecar, in Spain

**Fig. 2a:** The settlement of Artallo, in Liguria, Italy

**Fig. 2b:** The settlement of Apollonia, on Siphnos

**Fig. 3a:** A street in the settlement of Pyrgos, on Tinos, Cyclades

**Fig. 3b:** A street in the settlement of Santillana, Spain

**Fig. 4a:** A street in the settlement of Kastro, on Siphnos

**Fig. 4b:** A street in the settlement of Barbarano Romano, in Lazio, Italy

**Fig. 5a:** A vernacular house in Djerba, Tunisia

**Fig. 5b:** A vernacular house in Mykonos

habitants is expressed; there is no disposition for someone to appear stronger than his neighbour. This is observable in the examples cited already, as well as in many more in all the circum-Mediterranean countries.

A third noteworthy point is the formation of public places –streets and squares – and the relationship of these to private free space, as well as the way in which the two different spaces are interconnected.

It should be noted firstly that the building materials usually available are stones, natural slabs – of marble or schist – and pebbles. Thus it is to be expected that similar solutions emerge and the final picture of the street, whether this is at Pyrgos on Tinos in the Cyclades (fig. 3a), or at Santillana in Spain (fig. 3b) bespeaks the common logic behind the end result, equally functional and aesthetically excellent in both cases.<sup>4</sup>

However, beyond whatever form the street takes, it is first and foremost that public space which secures access to the houses surrounding it. This communication is achieved either through, usually, a tiny courtyard interposed between

the street and the house, or via a small stairway set parallel to the street, as in Siphnos (fig. 4a) or at Barbarano Romano in Lazio (fig. 4b). In other words, the open private space, such as the stairway in our example, is articulated and collaborates with the likewise free public space, so as to achieve communication between them. At the same time, this synthesis creates an especially interesting result in terms of formal plasticity.

Another point that merits consideration is the use of whitewash. In countless cases whitewash coats all the constructions, in small or larger houses (fig. 1a and 1b) inside or even outside the settlements, in the countryside (fig. 5a and 5b). It coats the churches and the belfries too, and is used thus as a unifying element, while at the same time creating the appropriate backdrop to receive the limited splashes of colour, red, green or blue, which pick out particular features, endowing the final effect with that special joy and aesthetic value that so often astounds us. The same whitewash is used to demarcate the edges of the street, to cover the joints in the pavement, creating surprising shapes, an almost dreamlike picture.

Aim of this brief introductory text is not an exhaustive presentation and comparative analysis and study of all the

<sup>4</sup> N.F. Carver Jr., *Iberian villages, Portugal and Spain*, Michigan 1981 and O. Doumanis and P. Oliver, *Shelter in Greece*, Athens 1974.

architectural forms that have appeared in the vernacular architecture of circum-Mediterranean countries, which are in any case many and diverse. Such an enterprise would demand the combined effort of several researchers and would lead to a more extensive text of another kind.

My aim is simply to point out certain common elements that exist in Mediterranean vernacular architecture, regardless of precisely where they are found.

I should also like to stress that these are forms that respond to common direct and daily needs of the people who built them and lived in them. They are constructions of an unpretentious architecture, absolutely functional, following the same logic, with the same or similar building methods and similar building materials.

They are constructions, however, which in the end and unintentionally teach us valuable lessons in aesthetics, which I fear we are sometimes in danger of forgetting.

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## A PROPOS DE L'ART 'SACRÉ'. QUELQUES CONSIDÉRATIONS À PARTIR DE L'EXPÉRIENCE ESTHÉTIQUE

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Lorsque l'on parle d'art, l'usage du qualificatif 'sacré' est habituellement motivé par un ensemble de considérations assez immédiates, qui concernent le sujet de la représentation, l'intention de l'artiste et les canons établis par le contexte socio-culturel. Ce genre de détermination se comprend immédiatement et ne pose pas de problème, ni dans le parler courant ni dans la lexique de l'histoire et de la critique d'art. D'autant plus que, pendant la presque totalité de son histoire, l'art s'est développé principalement comme moyen d'incarnation des sentiments et des idées religieuses.

Mais lorsque nous considérons la chose d'art en tant qu'objet esthétique, a-t-il encore un sens parler d'art 'sacré' ? L'esthéticien sera porté à répondre aussitôt par la négative, tandis que l'adepte des sciences religieuses essaiera peut-être de garder une place pour ce qualificatif dont le passé est si illustre. Au-delà des points de vue, la question peut mériter quelque attention. Autrement posée, elle est de savoir quelles sont – si elles existent – les conditions esthétiquement recevables qui nous suggèrent de considérer 'sacré' l'art dont certaines œuvres sont l'expression. Une telle interrogation revêt une importance non négligeable dans le contexte de la région méditerranéenne, où partout des vestiges artistiques plurimillénaires nous transmettent le témoignage de traditions religieuses qui n'ont jamais cessé de se confronter et qui ont toujours stimulé une réflexion esthétique. La même question remet en cause à la fois notre perception du fait artistique et notre relation actuelle, souvent problématique, avec les traditions religieuses gravées au sein de l'histoire. Elle nous renvoie, par la même occasion, aux sources de notre tradition de pensée sur l'art.

Précisons d'emblée que notre tentative de réponse se fonde sur la conviction que, malgré le pessimisme postmoderne sur la possibilité de définir l'art et d'établir des critères de goût, la notion d'expérience esthétique garde encore un sens et que celui-ci, de quelque manière qu'on l'entende, soit indissociable d'une dimension éthique, au sens le plus large du terme<sup>1</sup>.

### 1. Du spirituel dans l'œuvre d'art

La réflexion esthétique, entendue comme évaluation des phénomènes artistiques, a porté à une reconsidération critique du concept d'œuvre d'art, concept qui renvoie à une pratique d'appréciation articulée et complexe, bâtie sur des présupposés externes, en bonne part, à l'art elle-même. L'esthétique contemporaine dénonce, notamment, l'intention commune à toute la tradition philosophique occidentale, de Platon à Hegel et jusqu'à Heidegger, de reconduire l'art à sa propre vision des choses, à partir d'une idée philosophique de la 'vérité de l'art' qui a souvent produit une classification des arts à l'intérieur d'un système donné de pensée. Le fait de contester une telle détermination philosophique de l'espace de l'art a favorisé un vaste procès de normalisation des productions artistiques, devenues à nos yeux objets culturels pris en charge par les institutions tels les musées ou la critique. A cette sorte de désenchantement s'ajoute encore la considération de la reproductibilité technique, qui bouleverse notre perception des œuvres du passé. Les concepts classiques de la théorie esthétique (le génie créateur, la transcendance et la valeur d'éternité de l'œuvre) sont rejetés en bloc parce qu'on les considère comme les vecteurs d'une artificialité idéologique qui fait écran à une appréhension personnelle et appropriée.

Dans une perspective phénoménologique apparaît clairement l'impossibilité de comprendre la nature de l'objet esthétique en dehors de l'expérience que l'on en fait et de l'attention qu'on lui prête. L'attention fonde et précède le jugement esthétique, si bien que, sans l'hommage d'une perception adéquate, l'œuvre d'art demeure un objet ordinaire et n'atteint pas le statut d'objet esthétique. La même chose vaut évidemment dans le cas d'œuvres d'art (considéré) 'sacré'. Pouvons-nous dire, dans ce cas, qu'une perception inadéquate relègue le caractère sacré exclusivement aux aspects extérieurs de l'œuvre – aspects qui n'ont, en soi, aucun rapport avec sa valeur esthétique ni avec la pratique d'appréhension ?

Mais d'abord, quel est l'appréhension requise, par exemple, par un tableau d'autel du XVI<sup>e</sup> siècle ? Celle que lui vouait la foule en prière, chapelet à la main, dans une église de l'époque baroque ou celle des touristes peuplant aujourd'hui les musées ? Le déplacement survenu – de l'autel à la salle d'exposition – manifeste une plus vaste mutation des condi-

<sup>1</sup> Autrement dit : notre expérience esthétique représente cet espace privilégié de l'expérience qui nous communique une conscience de l'unité sensée de la vie humaine, malgré et à travers toutes les fragmentations que nous éprouvons. Une telle conscience semble aménager les conditions favorables au développement d'une théorie du sentir et d'une éthique de la perception, sans aucunement impliquer l'institution de 'canons' artistiques, mais au contraire en assumant la dissonance et l'irréconciliation qui se manifestent dans l'art.



tions qui régissent le fonctionnement de certains groupes, le déroulement de certaines pratiques d'appréhension, la mise en œuvre de certains jeux de langage. L'appréhension de l'œuvre, et l'expérience esthétique qu'elle suscite, sont profondément marquées par ces conditions culturelles et politiques, qui soutiennent l'accord des sensibilités à une époque donnée.

Evidemment nous ne pouvons pas faire abstraction de cet encadrement qui caractérise l'appréhension, pas plus que nous ne pouvons sortir de nous-mêmes pour gagner un regard plus distancié. Cela veut-il dire que le fameux tableau d'autel relève de l'art sacré pour le spectateur pieux d'antan et non pas pour nos contemporains visiteurs de musées ? Non, dans la mesure où nous croyons que les énoncés d'évaluation esthétique dépendent aussi des caractères de l'objet et gardent des 'valeurs de vérité' qui ne sont pas totalement soumis aux conditions d'appréhensions. Nous y reviendrons d'ici peu.

Pour sortir de l'impasse, on pourrait se résilier à parler plus modestement d'œuvres d'art à sujet religieux, et non pas d'art sacré. Titus Burckhardt, il y a un demi-siècle déjà, réclamait une telle distinction – bien que pour lui, elle devait conduire à la détermination de la 'forme' ou de l'essence' de l'art sacré. En s'appuyant sur une métaphysique établie, Burckhardt reconnaissait l'existence d'œuvres d'art 'essentiellement' profanes à sujet sacré, mais niait résolument, par contre, la possibilité inverse, à savoir la possibilité d'œuvres d'art sacré en forme profane<sup>2</sup>.

Aujourd'hui nous sommes délivrés de l'obsession pour la forme qui animait Burckhardt, et davantage sensibles à la diversité des objets culturels et à la pluralité des expériences esthétiques. Notre perspective est complètement différente, même si la distinction entre art sacré et art à sujet religieux semble garder son sens immédiat. Faut-il donc s'en contenter ? Il est vrai que la distinction sous-citée est utile pour parer à toute confusion, mais elle ne résout pas le problème. Parler d'un art à sujet religieux évite tout simplement de porter le discours sur le plan de l'expérience esthétique, en adoptant une classification reçue sur la base restreinte du thème de la représentation. Or le régime représentatif aménage un face-à-face figé entre l'œuvre et le spectateur, selon un schème de la vision construit sur le modèle d'une fenêtre sur le monde naturel, offerte au regard souverain du spectateur. Mais c'est justement une telle configuration qui, dans une perspective postmoderne, trahit ses intentions idéologiques et exclut la possibilité même d'une évocation du sacré.

La sécularisation achevée, personne ne pourrait nier que le spirituel ait bien encore une place dans la production d'art, mais celle-ci se trouve au-delà de toute distinction (car-tésienne et rassurante) entre le sacré et le profane. L'absolu dont l'art témoigne encore est disséminé dans des traces controversées et chaotiques (desquelles on ne saurait aucunement tirer une figure distincte) qui engagent le spectateur à changer sa posture et sa sensibilité, à réformer ses références. Les arts se révèlent ainsi comme le lieu (vicaire) du désir d'accomplissement et d'une quête d'authenticité contre la menace d'une perte de réalité, caractéristique de la société virtuelle. Ces configurations nouvelles du spirituel habitent l'art contemporain. Ils suscitent des expériences esthétiques qui interrogent le théologien autant que l'esthéticien.

Mené par ces considérations, nous pourrions en conclure

à une vision libérale et relativiste : chacun est en droit de voir l'empreinte du sacré où bon lui semble, du moment qu'il ne prétende pas l'attribuer à l'intentionnalité de l'œuvre ou de l'artiste. A nouveau, une telle conclusion serait partielle, et un retour prudent vers une esthétique de la représentation s'impose. En tant qu'objet esthétique, en effet, l'œuvre d'art à la fois représente et exprime quelque chose. Ce double mouvement lui est fondamental et justifie la richesse et la complexité de l'expérience esthétique.

Il faut assurément écarter une idée de la représentation comme un événement qui aurait lieu dans l'intériorité de la conscience, « comme un spectacle privé », selon le mot de Mikel Dufrenne<sup>3</sup>. Loin que l'œuvre soit en nous, nous sommes présents à elle. La représentation ne doit pas être une construction du sujet qui fait écran à la présence de l'œuvre, autrement on ne pourrait simplement pas parler d'expérience esthétique dans le sens qui nous intéresse ici. Pourtant l'expérience esthétique inclut toujours un moment de reconnaissance, un passage de la présence à la représentation qui évoque l'ancien concept de *mimesis* – souvent vitupéré, mais si difficile à vraiment saisir<sup>4</sup>. Non pas que l'œuvre ait sa vérité dans sa vraisemblance : elle ne renvoie pas à quelque chose en dehors d'elle dont l'évocation produirait l'expérience esthétique. Mais, alors même que nous apprécions une œuvre d'art abstrait, une dynamique de reconnaissance est inhérente au sentiment esthétique que nous éprouvons, ne fut-ce que sous la forme d'un rejet de tout sens accompli. Bien sur, ce qu'il y a à reconnaître, dans l'art moderne déjà, n'était plus de l'ordre des narrations significatives mais plutôt des gestes éparses et fragmentés. Il n'en reste pas moins, pour nous, que la valeur esthétique d'une œuvre se soustrait à un conventionnalisme intégral et garde quelque chose d'objectif, justement parce qu'il y a en elle expression et représentation, parce qu'elle nous émeut et nous fait signe tout à la fois. Nous pouvons en conclure que la valeur proprement esthétique de l'œuvre se découvre à l'intersection de la dimension objectuelle et de la construction intentionnelle, dans un territoire d'osmose entre l'objectif et le subjectif.

Si l'on revient maintenant à notre question du départ, on constate que l'œuvre d'art considérée en tant qu'objet esthétique ne laisse aucune place à l'évocation d'un horizon sacré au-delà de l'œuvre. En effet, cet horizon est une sorte de voile qui a longtemps empêché la perception de l'objet esthétique en tant que tel. L'œuvre d'art perçue comme objet esthétique n'est ni un symbole ni une évocation, mais plutôt une connexion de représentations qui suscite un sentiment de plaisir esthétique pour le fait même de sa manifestation sensible. La sécularisation a fait son œuvre et nous admirons les icônes byzantines anciennes ou le polyptique de l'*Agneau mystique* de Van Eyck sans nécessairement participer à la foi qui les fit naître, comme nous regardons certains portraits de Botticelli ou de Memling sans évoquer le modèle – qui nous reste souvent inconnu sans gâcher notre plaisir. Un tel défaut d'évocation, aboutissement de notre histoire culturelle, est

<sup>3</sup> *Phénoménologie de l'expérience esthétique*, vol. II, PUF, Paris, 1953, p. 423. Nous lisons par ailleurs aussi, dans le même ouvrage : « c'est l'œuvre qui exprime, mais l'œuvre, c'est d'abord ce qu'elle représente. Et c'est pourquoi l'unité de l'expression dépend aussi des objets représentés... » *Ibidem*, vol. I, p. 244.

<sup>4</sup> Voir pour cela la recherche méticuleuse de H. Koller, *Die Mimesis in der Antike*, Francke, Berna, 1954 et l'application originale qu'en fait H. Gadamer dans l'article *Kunst und Nachahmung (Kleine Schriften II. Interpretationen*, Mohr, Tübingen, 1967, pp. 16-26).

<sup>2</sup> Cf. *Principes et méthodes de l'art sacré*, Paul Derain, Lyon, 1958.

exactement ce qui rend possible l'appréhension esthétique de l'œuvre, dispensée du soin de reproduire et signifier. Dufrenne y insiste beaucoup : « Alors que la perception ordinaire cherche le sens du donné au-delà du donné, l'objet esthétique ne livre son sens qu'à la condition qu'au lieu de traverser le donné, la perception s'arrête à lui ; il ne tolère pas qu'elle décolle. »<sup>5</sup>

La sacralité de l'art, s'il en est une, est précisément dans ce renversement de la perception ordinaire qui porte notre attention sur l'être-là authentique de l'objet, sur sa présence où le signifié est immanent au signifiant et pour cela éveille en nous une participation affective.

## 2. Esthétique et théologie

L'analyse menée jusqu'ici a laissé émerger, comme on était en droit de se l'attendre, l'irrecevabilité de la détermination d'art 'sacré' dans le contexte d'une réflexion esthétique. Mais elle a paradoxalement mis en évidence le caractère quasi sacré de l'œuvre d'art en tant qu'objet esthétique, offert à notre regard plus laïque et attentionné dans sa pure manifestation, dans sa présence affranchie de conditionnements culturels ou idéologiques.

Comment la réflexion théologique contemporaine juge-t-elle ces résultats ? Est-elle sensible aux raisons de l'esthétique et assez hardie pour remettre en discussion des notions et des jugements aussi profondément ancrés dans l'histoire chrétienne ? La réponse doit tenir compte de la différenciation croissante des constructions théologiques, évidente désormais même en contexte catholique.

Dans l'optique du christianisme, l'art a toujours eu un rôle reconnu mais subsidiaire. Il a été considéré d'autant plus sacré que l'œuvre renvoie le récepteur vers le mystère dont elle offre la représentation. L'œuvre est un moyen pour élever l'esprit vers un 'ailleurs' qu'elle ne peut qu'évoquer. Ce qui demeure sacré, à proprement parler, est cet ailleurs, et non pas le moyen de s'y acheminer. Dans ce cadre de pensée, qui demeure platonicien, la dimension de l'apparaître est dépréciée à l'avantage exclusif d'un 'beau' idéal et suprasensible. L'art chrétien, en toute cohérence, n'a pas une valeur sacramentelle, mais instrumentale.

Le monde vrai, le monde beau, s'avère inaccessible ici-bas, et promis dans l'au-delà à l'homme capable de pénitence et de détachement. S'il existe une anticipation terrestre de cet idéal de beauté/vérité, elle est à chercher dans toute manifestation concrète d'amour pour l'autre et dans l'économie des sacrements qui certifient la présence du divin, mais non pas dans l'art, dont la disposition symbolique va de pair avec le pouvoir séducteur. Ainsi, à force de renvoyer à un horizon de transcendance, l'esthétique chrétienne a contribué à une vaste dévalorisation du sensible que la théologie patristique

de l'incarnation n'a pas efficacement tempéré<sup>6</sup>. De nos jours, les théologiens sont généralement prêts à reconnaître une telle dévalorisation du sensible et de l'apparaître comme un effet secondaire (non délibéré ?) du régime chrétien, qui a eu pour conséquence l'effacement de la condition corporelle de la subjectivité. En effet, le sujet ne possède pas la transparence d'une pure conscience, mais il est marqué par l'opacité d'un corps, avec son poids et son histoire, ses inclinations et ses fragilités singulières.

Comme l'on peut facilement se l'imaginer, une telle admission de la part des théologiens, bien que nuancée, a des effets très profonds pour la compréhension de la foi et de la morale. Pour ce qui nous importe ici, elle contribue aussi à une nouvelle considération de l'art – en tant qu'inscrit dans la matière – et de notre perception, qui doit habiter les choses au lieu de planer au dessus d'elles. Ainsi de nouveaux domaines s'ouvrent aux explorations de la théologie, avec la possibilité d'acquiescer une plus grande lucidité sur le fait de la foi et de renouer un contact avec d'autres disciplines dans l'espace du débat public. Pour ne faire qu'un exemple, reconnaître que la Parole de Dieu ne nous est accessible qu'en langage humain – et donc seulement à travers les représentations que nous devons à notre appartenance au monde – est un acte théologique désormais consensuel qui implique l'assomption d'une esthétique, entendue comme théorie de la perception.

Plus en général, on peut aisément reconnaître, dans la réflexion théologique contemporaine, un effort pour dépasser ou du moins pour compenser cet intellectualisme moderne qui tendait à exclure non seulement la question de la beauté, mais tout ce qui touche à la spiritualité, la sainteté, le culte, la liturgie, en aboutissant de la sorte à une dissociation irréversible entre théologie et expérience<sup>7</sup>.

Influencés par la fréquentation des œuvres d'arts, des théologiens tendent aussi à substituer aux stratégies apologétiques du passé une approche esthétique du mystère du monde et de la révélation divine. Ils concordent sur le fait qu'on ne peut pas vraiment comprendre l'univers de la foi sans référence à un 'sentir' entendu non pas comme un pur élan émotionnel mais comme la résonance auprès de la conscience de l'univers des relations et des affects. Une telle conviction, souvent malaisément ou partiellement exprimée, est à l'origine des diverses formes de 'théologie de la beauté', qui revendiquent une valorisation de l'expérience et de la sensibilité artistiques dans les diverses confessions chrétiennes ainsi que dans le dialogue interreligieux. Les 'théologies de la beauté' reconnaissent que l'unité symbolique d'hier est perdue et pointent

<sup>6</sup> Au contraire, d'après certains, la théologie de l'incarnation aurait fourni un alibi des plus solides à une dépréciation systématique du sensible et du corporel. Mais la question est complexe et ne peut être abordée ici que de façon très vague et indéterminée. Les Pères de l'Eglise sont passionnément sincères lorsqu'ils attestent, sur la base des Ecritures, que le salut de l'homme se joue dans la chair. Dieu qui s'incarne, nous disent-ils, assume la condition sensible en vue de la glorifier. Pour l'homme et la femme, image de Dieu, l'incarnation est une dimension essentielle du mode d'être au monde qui les caractérise. Le mode humain d'existence, décrit par la Bible comme 'chair', union de matière et d'esprit en un corps vivant et sexué, est déclaré être très bon (cf. Gn 1,31). C'est par contre la réflexion morale qui pousse les mêmes Pères à mettre en garde contre les tentations de la chair, qui rendent sourd aux exigences de l'esprit. Mais dans leur perspective, il n'y a pas de contradiction entre une affirmation et l'autre. Elles sont même inséparables.

<sup>7</sup> Un discours à part devrait être fait à propos de la théologie orientale orthodoxe, qui a toujours gardé un enracinement dans la dimension culturelle de l'expérience religieuse, au prix d'une certaine méfiance à l'égard des constructions rationnelles.

<sup>5</sup> *Phénoménologie de l'expérience esthétique*, cit., vol. I, p. 171.

sur les conséquences d'une telle perte : l'aliénation du sens, l'incapacité de plus unifier, de plus saisir l'ensemble complexe de la matière et de l'esprit, du terrestre et du divin. Faute de pouvoir recréer artificiellement l'unité symbolique perdue, les théologiens invitent à la retrouver non pas tant dans les vestiges du passé, mais plutôt dans la pratique religieuse elle-même, qui apparaît à leur analyse comme un ensemble d'espaces de sensibilité, de postures, de gestes et de rites. Bref : une manière de 'sentir' le monde et d'y vivre dans la foi.

Cette orientation 'esthétique' de la recherche théologique rencontre bien sur des résistances et des incompréhensions, mais elle ouvre sans doute des possibilités dont tout le système des sciences religieuses peut globalement bénéficier. La question ultérieure – qui nous reconduit à notre point de départ – est de savoir dans quelle mesure les théologiens sensibles à l'esthétique perçoivent l'autonomie et la différenciation de l'art contemporain comme une invitation à entrer, en théologien, dans le pluralisme de la postmodernité<sup>8</sup>.

L'œuvre d'art comme objet esthétique réclame une attention qui soit aussi indifférence aux significations, pour réagir à la domination des images et des symboles qui alimentent nos codes moraux et nos systèmes théologiques<sup>9</sup>. Le pluralisme irréductible des œuvres d'art représente une occasion pour voir et entendre autrement les autres et le monde parce qu'il nous oblige à renouveler notre perception. En même temps, la complexité des pratiques artistiques nous invite à déployer la question du sens dans toutes ses dimensions – aussi bien comme sensation renvoyant à la matérialité du signe et à l'expérience de sa présence, que comme signifiante/signification et enfin comme direction, finalité, intérêt – pour retrouver ainsi la place du théologique dans le concours des savoirs spécialisés.

Ce sont là autant de provocations très positives, pour une théologie soucieuse de parler aux hommes d'aujourd'hui en assumant les fractures d'un monde complexe mais aussi en réagissant contre l'anesthésie de nos sens par l'excès de stimuli. Le soin de la conscience esthétique représente une tâche non négociable de l'élaboration théologique, parce qu'une telle conscience est toujours opérante lorsque l'être humain perçoit quelque chose comme un bien digne d'être accueilli dans l'espace de son expérience.

<sup>8</sup> Il s'agit, nous paraît-il, d'une interrogation cruciale, que Ch. Theobald a exprimée en ces termes : « Si le contact avec la peinture, la musique et la littérature peut aider le théologien à percevoir et à discerner la beauté propre du monde de la vie des chrétiens, est-il conduit par là jusqu'à penser théologiquement l'autonomisation moderne des beaux-arts ? » *Le christianisme comme "style". Relecture du thème "Esthétique et théologie"*, dans « Recherches de science religieuse », 85 (1997), pp. 589-600, ici p. 600.

<sup>9</sup> Cf. D. Freedberg, *The Power of Images: Studies in the History and Theory of Response*, University of Chicago Press, Chicago 1989 (voir notamment le deuxième chapitre : « The God in the Image »).

## POÉTIQUE MÉDITERRANÉENNE D'ANDRÉ GIDE: LES NOURRITURES TERRESTRES

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La production littéraire d'André Gide c'était étalée de la dernière partie du dix-neuvième siècle jusqu'à la moitié du vingtième siècle. Il a traversé plusieurs époques littéraires ainsi qu'il a vécu pas mal d'événements de l'importance (guerres mondiales, révolutions communistes, chutes des monarchies, établissement d'indépendances des colonies en Afrique du Nord et ailleurs). En quatre-vingts ans de vie il a publié une grande quantité d'ouvrages, à des années de distance, créés d'une patience et presque toujours d'un labeur épuisant. L'inspiration créatrice de *Paludes*<sup>1</sup> est le fruit d'un travail pénible et lent, l'explosion des *Nourritures*<sup>2</sup> n'est rien moins que spontanée: il la présente au monde après trois ans d'efforts. Il a souvent dit que, dès ses premiers pas d'écrivain, il s'était engagé à la rédaction de ses œuvres complètes, que le plan en était tout formé dans son esprit, que la direction dans laquelle tirait un ouvrage était immédiatement et au même temps compensée par la direction contraire dans laquelle tirait un autre, et qu'il se désolait de n'avoir pu écrire tous ses livres en même temps.

C'est un fait, pourtant, qu'après la transformation difficile<sup>3</sup> qui l'a conduit aux *Nourritures*, Gide connaît sa direction et ce qu'il veut faire. Tous les ouvrages auxquels il pense ne seront pas écrits et, d'après les esquisses qu'il en donne dans son *Journal*<sup>4</sup>, on regrette que beaucoup d'entre eux n'aient pas été écrits.

Les *Nourritures terrestres*, au titre plutôt agressif (car y a-t-il d'autres nourritures, pour un protestant, que spirituelles!), expriment le dépassement lyrique des limites en célèbrent la vie, l'instant, la joie des sens, et seront considérées par les lecteurs de l'époque (publiées en 1897) pour autre chose qu'une « apologie du dénuement »<sup>5</sup>. Elles chantent la libération que Gide a connue pendant son premier séjour en

Tunisie d'octobre 1893 au juillet 1895. Il est guéri de sa maladie physique, car il croyait depuis longtemps sa vie menacée, ainsi que de ses troubles mentales qui le hantaient avec le postulat d'être chaste et plein de l'effroi du péché, fidèle à son amour pur pour sa cousine et fiancée M.R.

Dans cette conversion héroïque la volonté a joué le plus grand rôle. Elle apparaît moins comme une libération de forces longtemps et impatientement contenues que comme une remise en question du monde et de soi à partir de l'étrange sentiment qu'on éprouve de ne pas tout à fait exister, de voir le monde comme une scène où s'agitent des acteurs. Se situer dans la réalité et dans sa propre existence, André Gide ne le pouvait faire autrement que par un coup de force, en repartant à zéro. Jusqu'à ce temps-là, il avait vécu dans les nuages, une âme promise à Dieu. Descendant sur terre, il découvre le fait d'exister dans le monde à travers le « fait de conscience » élémentaire qui joint dans un unique phénomène le sujet et l'objet: la sensation. C'est à partir de la sensation qu'on éprouve toute vie, qu'on s'élabore la conscience propre à soi. C'est à partir d'une analyse de la sensation qu'on se construit une philosophie nouvelle. D'instinct, André Gide est allé à l'essentiel.

Contre ses critiques ardents - Massis<sup>6</sup>, qui déplore que « ce qui est mise en cause ici, c'est la notion même de l'homme sur laquelle nous vivons », Clouard, Ghéon et plusieurs autres, Gide prend le parti de la littérature qui se libère de tout modèle déterminé ainsi comme de toute justification externe à elle. Il inclut, dès ses premières œuvres et grâce à la pratique de la création réflexive et de l'autonomie, le lecteur et le critique dans l'ordre diégétique lui-même. La beauté de son œuvre s'exprime surtout dans le jaillissement de cet équilibre où se fondent sans se détruire, pour le plaisir de sensibilité du lecteur et l'excitation de son intelligence, la voix de la représentation et celle de l'interrogation, de l'ironie. Ce jaillissement de clarté et de sens délimite ce que Gide appelle le « point de vue esthétique ».

L'œuvre de Gide, et davantage les *Nourritures terrestres*, dénonce tout effort de la critique pour la délimiter dans un apriorisme, qu'il soit moral, politique ou même esthétique.

<sup>1</sup> *Paludes*, Romans, récits et soties, œuvres lyriques, NRF, Gallimard, Bibliothèque de la Pléiade.

<sup>2</sup> *Les Nourritures terrestres*, Romans, récits et soties, œuvres lyriques, NRF, Gallimard, Bibliothèque de la Pléiade.

<sup>3</sup> Gide était éduqué dans un protestantisme strict qui lui a causé beaucoup de souffrance mentale et physique pendant son adolescence. Après son séjour en Afrique, il embrasse sa homosexualité, mais pas sans troubles qui lui viennent de sa famille et du public.

<sup>4</sup> *Journal*, 1889-1939, NRF, Gallimard, Bibliothèque de la Pléiade.

<sup>5</sup> *Journal*, 24.mars 1935, p.1222.

<sup>6</sup> Cité dans la lettre de Gide à Massis, dans *Œuvres complètes*, tome XII, 1937, p. 555.

tique, ou dans la pure représentation d'événements autobiographiques. Elle est rupture, et son classicisme est plutôt création<sup>7</sup> au lieu d'être imitation. Elle témoigne sa poétique à lui : son objet est l'écriture productrice d'un univers littéraire parfaitement neuf, avec son ordre, son intelligence clairvoyante, sa sensibilité particulière, son prométhéisme.

Sa démarche poétique, la recherche d'une forme, est surtout une entreprise de faire convenir le langage choisi à la structure des émotions ressenties, car l'œuvre produit une émotion proprement esthétique. Elle n'est plus tout à fait celle vécue dans l'instant qui l'avait inspirée. Gide construit son œuvre en concordant ainsi la maîtrise d'une forme singulière qui est à la fois sens et esprit. Il s'agit chez lui de la représentation d'une problématique complexe du soi qui ne doit pas se formuler ou se présenter d'une manière ou forme différente. Elle cependant exige une élaboration précise qui tend à se masquer pour pouvoir produire des images concurrentes ou filtrantes. Il y représente, soit dans la douleur, soit dans la ferveur, une volonté et une sensibilité qui permettent au soi de dépasser des limitations étouffantes et de s'installer dans la jouissance d'une émotion affirmée dans sa forme pure, celle du langage esthétique de la création littéraire.

Comme l'exprime le titre des *Nourritures terrestres*, sa conversion est matérialiste. Pour Gide le néophyte le monde existe surtout par les sens, par la sensation, il est compréhensible, connaissable à travers un rapport de participation. L'excitation appelle la réaction qui, à son tour, suscite de nouveaux stimuli. L'individu est emporté dans une ronde (il y a beaucoup de « rondes » dans les *Nourritures*) et il se découvre en même temps qu'il découvre l'objet : ils s'établissent du même mouvement.

Gide présente le chant des cinq sens et trouve un contentement éperdu à « nommer » les choses : « Il y a déjà un grand plaisir, Nathanaël, à déjà tout simplement affirmer : le fruit du palmier s'appelle datté et c'est un mets délicieux.<sup>8</sup> » Ce « grand plaisir » équivaut à une nouvelle naissance qui offre à Gide une nouvelle possibilité d'exister dans ce monde désormais pourvu de formes, de couleurs, d'odeurs, de saveurs, de densité. C'est sur le mode de l'expression lyrique qu'il exprime sa reconnaissance. Les dieux de son adolescence, ceux de Virgile et d'Homère, contribuent à le lui découvrir le monde que le Dieu de son enfance lui avait caché. Mais c'est le christianisme qui lui avait contribué cet autre sens qu'on appelle 'intérieur'. C'est par lui que la joie se transforme en bonheur, se réfléchit en conscience d'être, se métamorphose en ferveur. Cette joie éblouissante, comme il décrit dans son *Journal*, n'est pas tout à fait une évasion sans limites, une dissolution. Cette joie lui revient pour s'éprouver et sans cesse aller demander

à être renouvelée, fortifiée. « Le petit garçon qui s'amuse » est constamment « doublé d'un pasteur protestant qui l'ennuie », ce qui donne à son œuvre l'impression d'un prêche pour la libération, la joie de vivre, le bonheur. Mais cette joie il faut mériter et conquérir, difficilement, en conscience et dans la responsabilité. Pour Gide c'est un devoir que d'être heureux, le plus grand des devoirs.

Sa conversion s'également effectue par le langage. C'est par le langage et à travers lui qu'il a fait naître le monde qui, autrement, échappait à sa prise. Il s'est appuyé sur le langage pour prendre ses propres mesures. Il se tient à ce langage comme à un roc, voyant en lui les preuves de ses moments d'existence. S'il se détache si facilement de l'œuvre qu'il vient d'écrire, c'est que pour lui elle a joué son rôle, qui était expérience de vie par le langage. A travers l'expérience vécue, morte, puis renaissant de ses cendres, le langage lui offre de nouvelles possibilités et de nouvelles expériences. En faisant confiance à l'art, il lui a voué sa vie. Son œuvre est une manière d'exister pour lui, dans son intégralité.

Les *Nourritures terrestres* consiste de huit livres dont la composition est complexe et multiple - des hymnes, des rondes, des chants, des dialogues, une symphonie entière des sons et des mots reflétant la nature des endroits de son séjour. Ce sont des pays encerclant la Méditerranée - Italie, Sud de France, Tunisie, Algérie, Maroc... qui lui offrent une possibilité pour une vie nouvelle, une vie différente, riche de symboles vivants. L'Afrique du Nord surtout devient sa patrie mythique où il fait l'expérience de la re-naissance de soi. Elle engendre son goût du nomadisme, de la guette des plaisirs sensuels et de la liberté sexuelle, de la nudité enfantine, à l'inclusion de sa propre nudité, de l'authenticité. Elle engendre la joie de ce qui existe, avec toute la générosité qui en résulte, et forme une complicité intime avec de la clarté de l'aube et du soleil levant. Cette renaissance, qui est acceptation de sa différence, passe par la rencontre avec l'Autre.

Le monde des *Nourritures terrestres* est peuplé par un grand nombre de personnes, mais il y a surtout deux qui présentent la structure narrative de *mise en abîme* chère à Gide, le créateur d'un monde littéraire et autobiographique à lui : Nathanaël<sup>9</sup>, un disciple, un jeune homme à qui le narrateur, un philosophe aimable et fervent, s'adresse tout au long de huit livres, et Ménalque, une personnage de Virgile (*Bucoliques* III et V. Dans les dialogues avec son camarade, berger Mopsus - une personnage qui apparaît dans le quatrième livre et chante la *Ballade des biens immeubles* - dit à Ménalque : « Tu es le plus âgé de nous deux, Ménalque, il est juste que je t'obéisse.. »), qui joue le rôle de l'éducateur et le guide au narrateur, ainsi qu'au Nathanaël. Les diverses autres personnes sont des porte-parole pour les différents aspects des idées ménalesques rendues à travers les odes, les ballades, les rondes, les cantiques à l'occasion des soirées et des nuits qu'elles ont passées ensemble, chantant, parlant, discutant à la manière du *symposium*.

<sup>7</sup> Gide dit ce-ci dans *Feuillets*, l'hiver 1911. (*Journal*, 1889-1939, NRF, Gallimard, Bibliothèque de la Pléiade) :

« Mon esprit profondément créateur se nourrissait surtout de la beauté encore informe des choses. L'œuvre d'art, épurée (*épuisée* de laideurs), ne m'intéressait que par ce que l'on sent de durable dans la fixation d'une plus parfaite harmonie. La vie m'intéressait davantage ; plus dramatique et talonnant à cause même de sa fugacité. L'harmonie parfaite toujours imaginable me plaisait moins que la déformation hargneuse de cette harmonie selon une personnalité. La volonté artistique ne m'apparaissait point tant un choix de lignes, de tons, ou de sonorités, en vue d'une œuvre harmonieuse, qu'un travail en pleine harmonie pour dévier (déformer) cette harmonie selon soi. La trace de l'homme était ce que je cherchais dans toute œuvre. », p. 343-344.

<sup>8</sup> Les *Nourritures terrestres*, p. 172.

<sup>9</sup> Nathanaël, c'est le cinquième homme appelé à suivre Jésus, sur le conseil de son ami Philippe (Nouveau testament, l'Évangile de Jean, chapitre I, verset 48 et suivants). Jésus fera de lui un très beau compliment (véritable israélite, en lui point d'artifice). Aussi, à Nathanaël s'adresse cette promesse inouïe : « Vous verrez le ciel ouvert et les anges de Dieu montant et descendant sur le Fils de l'Homme » (Jean 1,51).

Le nom signifie « don de Dieu ».

Dans le premier livre le narrateur-poète offre à Nathanaël des maximes pour vivre:

»Ne souhaite pas, Nathanaël, trouver Dieu ailleurs que partout. Chaque créature indique Dieu, aucune ne le révèle. Dès que notre regard s'arrête à elle, chaque créature nous détourne de Dieu... Dieu, disait Ménalque: c'est ce qui est devant nous. Que l'importance soit dans ton regard, non dans la chose regardée«, (p.156).  
»Non point la sympathie, Nathanaël, l'amour... Nathanaël, je t'enseignerai la ferveur. Une existence pathétique plutôt que la tranquillité.« (p.156).

Il célèbre dans le second livre les nourritures et les instants.

»Je m'attends à vous, nourritures!  
Ma faim ne se posera pas à mi-route;  
Elle ne se taira que satisfaite;  
Satisfactions! Je vous cherche.  
Vous êtes belles que les aurores d'été.« (p. 167)

Dans le troisième, le narrateur décrit des endroits, des villes et des temps différents qui influencent sa prise de conscience de beauté des phénomènes de la nature.

»Volupté! Ce mot, je voudrais le redire sans cesse: je le voudrais le synonyme de bien-être, et même qu'il suffît de dire être, simplement.« (p. 174)

Villa Borghèse, Adriatique, Colline de Fiesole, Rome, Monte Picino, Amalfi, Syracuse, Tunis, Malte, Blidah, la navire expriment l'émotion de plus en plus ardente et précipitée. Aussi, un rencontre nocturne avec un enfant qui est du même parti avec cette exaltation.

»Et les corps délicats épousés sous les branches.  
J'ai touché d'un doigt délicat sa peau nacrée.  
Je voyais ses pieds délicats qui posaient bruit sur le sable.« (p. 176)

Dans le quatrième livre c'est Ménalque lui-même qui reprend le parole en s'adressant à Nathanaël et aux amis réunis un soir dans un jardin sur la colline de Florence.

»Je traversais des villes, et ne voulais m'arrêter nulle part. Heureux, pensai-je, qui ne s'attache à rien sur la terre et promène une éternelle ferveur à travers les constants mobilités. Je haïssais les familles, les foyers, tous lieux où l'homme pense trouver un repos... je disais que chaque nouveauté doit nous trouver tout entiers disponibles... « (p. 184)

Réunis, les amis de Ménalque – Angaire, Ydier, Tityre, Alcide, Hylas, Moelibée, Mopsus, Simiane et quelques autres - chantent les fruits, les voluptés, les désirs: *Ronde de la grenade, Ballade des plus célèbres amants* (Bethsabée et David, Ammon et Tamar, Sulamite, Ariane et Thésée, Eurydice et Orphée), *Ballade des biens immeubles, Ronde des maladies, Ronde de tous mes désirs.*

»Hélas! Hélas! je sais comment prolonger ma souffrance;  
Mais mon plaisir je ne sais comment l'approvoiser.  
Entre le désir et l'ennui notre inquiétude balance.«  
(p. 202)

Suit le livre de la ferme, »Pluvieuse terre de Normandie; campagne domestiquée« (p. 205), le voyage en diligence, les auberges; le poète chante toutes les portes de la ferme, les granges, les greniers, la laiterie, l'étable, le fruitier, le pressoir, la distillerie, les remises... »La dernière porte ouvrirait sur la plaine.« (p. 214)

Dans le livre six de *Lyncéus*, citant Goethe, *Faust*, II, au commencement

»Zum sehen geboren  
Zum schauen bestellt.« (p. 215),

André Gide célèbre les sources, les soifs étanchées, les sommeils, les couches, les demeures, il parle des villes, des cafés, il note l'émotion d'une minute, produit de tant d'impressions confuses et coordonnées.

Dans les deux derniers livres, ce sont encore des notes de voyage, des fragments sur Alger, Biskra, Chetma, Blidah, Touggourt. Il peint les oasis, les caravanes, le désert, les insomnies. Enfin, dans l'*Envoï* qui clôt les *Nourritures*, il s'adresse avec son avis à Nathanaël à s'émanciper de son livre.

»Jette mon livre... Quitte-moi; Je suis las de faindre d'éduquer quelqu'un. Quand ai-je dit que je te voulais pareil à moi? – C'est parce que tu diffère de moi que je t'aime... Ne t'attache en toi qu'à ce que tu sens qui n'est nulle part ailleurs qu'en toi-même, et crée de toi, impatiemment ou patiemment, ah! le plus irremplaçable des êtres.« (p. 248)

La haine du romantisme le rétorque contre la métaphore et le raffermi dans l'élaboration de son propre classicisme esthétique, entrelacé de l'ironie et d'imagisme mimétique. Néanmoins, son œuvre cesse de représenter purement son regard-reflet narcissique exprimé dans ses œuvres débutantes et mis en place un champ poétique ouvert à la pluralité des sens pour préciser son identité littéraire idiosyncrasique. Gide utilise l'exemple de la peinture naturaliste, mais d'une forme particulière qu'anticipe la préciosité artificielle de post-moderne.